

Lebanon

Down With UN Intervention! Israel Out Now!

For over a month, Lebanon was a place of carnage, destruction and horror inflicted by relentless Israeli bombardment backed up by some 30,000 invading troops, all with the full support of U.S. imperialism. Over 1,000 men, women and children were slaughtered, nearly a quarter of the population was displaced, and the infrastructure of the country was devastated. The Zionist regime of Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz declared that their intent was the annihilation of Hezbollah. But Hezbollah not only survived the onslaught, it inflicted significant casualties on the Israeli military as well as damage to tanks and other vehicles. Israel's setback in Lebanon has touched off a crisis for the Olmert regime, while Hezbollah is now idolized by much of the region's Arab population.

The failure of Israel's campaign in Lebanon is really what is behind the United Nations-sponsored cease-fire agreement, which Israel has repeatedly violated. Having opposed a cease-fire for weeks, the Bush administration suddenly switched track when it became clear that Israel was running into trouble in pursuing its military objectives. The crux of the agreement is a plan to deploy some 15,000 UN troops in southern Lebanon, although no foreign power was exactly jumping to place its forces between Hezbollah and Israel and get caught in a potential quagmire. But after initially offering only 200 troops, the French imperialists, Lebanon's former colonial overlords, have now committed 2,000 troops and the Italians up to 3,000.

The purpose of this imperialist UN force is to try to accomplish what the Israeli military could not—the neutralization of Hezbollah and its fighters. It is a set-up for more repression against the peoples of Lebanon. It was U.S., French and Italian “peacekeepers” in Lebanon who disarmed Palestine Liberation Organization fighters in 1982, laying the basis for the massacre of some 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps at the hands of fascist Christian forces organized by the Israeli military. In the recent conflict, we called for the military defense of Hezbollah while maintaining our political opposition to that reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit. Today, we demand the full and immediate withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Lebanon and say: **UN troops out of Lebanon now!**



Lebanese return to devastated south Beirut, August 14.

Addario/NY Times

U.S. Out of Iraq, Afghanistan! Hands Off Iran!

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

As they carried out their slaughter in Lebanon, the Zionist rulers continued their campaign of repression and murder in the Occupied Territories. Nearly 200 Palestinians have been killed since late June, when militants seized an Israeli soldier. Dozens of Palestinian legislative and government officials from Hamas remain in Israeli prisons, while several imperialist powers, as well as Israel, have continued their embargo of the Palestinians as punishment for the election of a Hamas government in January. **Defend the Palestinian people! Down with the embargo! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories—Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights!**

A July 21 leaflet issued by the Spartacist League/U.S. that was distributed at protests throughout the country warned against any illusions in the UN or other

imperialist agencies as protectors of the oppressed masses of the Near East and declared: *“The myriad peoples of the Near East will not know peace, prosperity or justice until bourgeois rule in the region is overthrown through a series of socialist revolutions”* (“Down With Zionist Onslaught Against Lebanon, Gaza!” WV No. 874, 4 August). Opposed to this Marxist perspective, the reformist left internationally has given either open or backhanded support to imperialist “peacekeepers.”

In Britain, Socialist Workers Party leader Lindsey German signed a letter on behalf of the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) pleading with the Tony Blair government to call for “an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.” Then, shortly after the UN-brokered cease-fire went into effect, the StWC canceled an August 19 London demonstration. For the StWC

there was nothing left to protest, even as the imperialists were gathering forces to occupy Lebanon! In France, the pseudo-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) cosigned a call for an August 12 Paris demonstration calling on the Chirac government to “act without delay for an unconditional ceasefire” and demanding that the European Union (EU) impose “sanctions against the Israeli government.” These fake socialists promote as a force for peace the imperialist rulers who have waged war against the immigrant and Muslim populations of their countries, who carved up the Near East into a cauldron of national, ethnic and religious bloodletting, who slaughtered countless millions in their former colonies. And now they’re getting the “cease-fire” they called for, in the form of the biggest “peace-keeping” force in the EU’s history.

In the U.S., the Workers World Party (WWP), which acts as press agents for the Hezbollah fundamentalists, covers for imperialist intervention by refusing to oppose the UN intervention to which Hezbollah agreed. In 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon in the midst of the Lebanese civil war, the WWP helped build a demonstration that June, which demanded “effective U.S. action to achieve Israeli withdrawal.” It was such “action” that led straight to Sabra and Shatila.

Imperialist Hands Off Iran!

The U.S. firmly backed Israel’s onslaught against Lebanon as part of its attempt to build a “new Middle East” by stamping out any regime or political force that does not bow to its dictates. In Iraq, the bloody U.S. occupation is resulting in the deaths of thousands each month, mainly now at the hands of sectarian violence. Meanwhile, U.S./NATO forces continue to pound the peoples of Afghanistan, where the imperialist occupation has meant continued brutal oppression of women and tribal warfare.

Syria and Iran, both of which support Hezbollah, have been repeatedly threatened by the U.S. and allied imperialists. A 21 August *New Yorker* article by Seymour Hersh stated that the U.S. and Israel had made preparations for an attack on Hezbollah well before the group abducted two Israeli soldiers on July 12. Hersh quoted a “Middle East expert” who said, “The White House was more focused on stripping Hezbollah of its missiles,

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South Africa: Permanent Revolution vs. “Two-Stage” Stalinist Betrayal...8

Defend Canadian Public Workers Union! Defend the Palestinians!

Zionist Backlash Over “Boycott Israel” Call

The following was issued on August 11 as a special supplement to Spartacist Canada, publication of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

For standing in defense of Palestinian national rights, the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees [CUPE] has come under furious attack from the government, media and sections of the labour bureaucracy and NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party]. Apologists for Zionist state terror rail that CUPE Ontario's defense of Palestinian rights equals support to terrorism. Others have viciously slandered the union stance as anti-Semitic. All opponents of Israel's murderous assault on Lebanon and its ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people must defend CUPE Ontario against this pro-Zionist right-wing backlash!

CUPE Ontario's late May convention, attended by 900 delegates representing

200,000 union members, unanimously adopted a resolution calling to “support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until that state recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination.” Endorsing a July 2005 call to action by 180 Palestinian organizations, the resolution specifically demands the dismantling of the “apartheid wall” built to seal off the West Bank, as well as the right of return for all Palestinian refugees. These demands are squarely in the interests of working people throughout the world. Unions elsewhere, including the COSATU labour federation in South Africa, have now raised similar calls.

CUPE Ontario's stance slammed into a ramped-up “war on terror” that targets the Muslim population for state repression, as well as the [Conservative Party leader Stephen] Harper government's hardline support for Israel. Canada was the first country to cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority following the election of

Hamas earlier this year, acting even before the United States, Ottawa's senior partner and Israel's chief paymaster. Harper has obscenely described the death and destruction raining down on Lebanon as a “measured” response by Israel.

CUPE Ontario's call for active labour support to Palestinian national rights marks a break with the pro-Zionist consensus that has historically dominated in the Canadian labour bureaucracy and especially the NDP. Some unions, notably the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council, have defended CUPE Ontario against the right-wing onslaught. But in the main, the labour misleaders have distanced themselves from or actively oppose CUPE Ontario's stance. Among the most vile is New Democrat MP [Member of Parliament] Pat Martin, who raved in a letter to the rabidly Zionist *National Post* (5 June) that “the state of Israel deserves the support of the international labour movement.... As a trade unionist and an NDP MP, I do not want to be associated in any way with the Ontario CUPE resolution.”

Both the national and B.C. [British Columbia] CUPE leaderships have made clear that they disagree with the CUPE Ontario resolution. The president of CUPE Local 2063 led a pro-Zionist picket of the union's Toronto offices. It has been widely reported that a member of the University of Toronto teaching assistants Local 3902 is preparing a lawsuit against the union, attacking its right to defend causes that are “irrelevant” to its members' interests. This is a frontal attack on the right of the labour movement to champion

causes on behalf of the oppressed and an open invitation to union-busting by the capitalist state. *Defeat the Zionist backlash—Defend union rights!*

Also joining the chorus against CUPE Ontario is Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove. While denouncing CUPE Ontario's “finger-pointing and boycotts,” Hargrove salutes Israel's rulers—including war criminal Ariel Sharon, who he calls a “brave leader”—for making “genuine progress” by pulling out of Gaza last year (*Toronto Star*, 5 June). Seeking to line up the working class behind the bourgeoisie's anti-Palestinian backlash, this labour traitor reserves his ire for “the election of the terrorist organization Hamas.”

Contrary to Hargrove's whitewash, Israel's “disengagement” from Gaza, combined with the wall sealing off the West Bank, has allowed the Zionist rulers to even more effectively strangle the Palestinian population economically while giving the army a freer hand for military terror. Gaza is little more than a concentration camp: an impoverished, devastated strip where 1.4 million Palestinians are trapped, surrounded by the sea, an electrified fence and a wall sealing its border with Egypt.

Relentless state terror and devastation by Israel have long been visited upon the Palestinians. Combined with the political bankruptcy of Palestinian nationalism, exemplified by the ignominious 1993 Oslo deal between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, this has driven much of the Palestinian people into the arms of the reactionary, anti-woman and anti-Semitic outfit Hamas. The latter's electoral victory was met with a starvation embargo. Now, with their imprisonment of much of the Palestinian cabinet, the Zionist rulers, like their U.S. patrons, are asserting their “right” to carry out “regime change” against any Palestinian government not to their liking. *Down with the starvation embargo! No U.S./Canadian aid to Israel! Free the Hamas ministers, legislators and other victims of Zionist repression! Israel out of Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and all the Occupied Territories!*

Boycotts, Divestment and the Class Struggle

To his credit, CUPE Ontario president Sid Ryan has refused to buckle in the face



TROTSKY

Bolshevism and the Spanish Civil War

Seventy years ago, the Spanish working class rose up against General Franco's attempt to overthrow the Republican government, which touched off the 1936-39 Civil War. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky and his Spanish comrades stressed, the road to defeating Franco's fascist forces lay in the seizure of state power by the proletariat. But the treacherous leaders of the working class—centrally the Stalinists, joined by the social democrats, anarchists and the centrist POUM

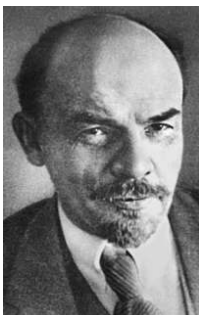
(Workers Party of Marxist Unification)—allied with the Republican bourgeoisie in a popular-front government. Their collaboration in the suppression of the insurgent workers paved the way for the victory of Franco's forces.

According to the Socialists and Stalinists, i.e., the Mensheviks of the first and second instances, the Spanish revolution was called upon to solve only its “democratic” tasks, for which a united front with the “democratic” bourgeoisie was indispensable. From this point of view, any and all attempts of the proletariat to go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy are not only premature but also fatal. Furthermore, on the agenda stands not the revolution but the struggle against the insurgent Franco.

Fascism, however, is not feudal but bourgeois reaction. A successful fight against bourgeois reaction can be waged only with the forces and methods of the proletarian revolution. Menshevism, itself a branch of bourgeois thought, does not have and cannot have any inkling of these facts.

The Bolshevik point of view, clearly expressed only by the young section of the Fourth International, takes the theory of permanent revolution as its starting point, namely, that even purely democratic problems, like the liquidation of semi-feudal land ownership, cannot be solved without the conquest of power by the proletariat; but this in turn places the socialist revolution on the agenda.

—Leon Trotsky, “The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning,” 17 December 1937, reprinted in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* (Pathfinder, 1973)



LENIN

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CORRECTION

In the article “Defend Mississippi Abortion Clinic!” (WV No. 874, 4 August), we wrote: “NOW gathered to appeal to the legislators at the capital, whose state flag incorporates the Confederate stars and bars, symbol of slavery.” While the “stars and bars” flag is certainly a symbol of slavery, the flag that is incorporated into the

Mississippi state flag is the much more well-known Confederate battle flag. The “stars and bars” was the official flag of the Confederacy from 1861 until 1863. Due to the similarity between the Union flag and the “stars and bars,” the Confederate battle flag was more frequently used during the fighting.

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Bush, the Democrats and the London “Terror” Scare

The “war on terror” has been ratcheted up yet again after British authorities arrested some two dozen British-born Muslims on August 10, claiming that they had engaged in a conspiracy to blow up airplanes flying to the U.S. The record of British security in combatting “terror” includes the July 2005 killing of Brazilian-born electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, who police later admitted had nothing to do with the London bombing that month, and the shooting of a young Muslim in his London home this summer, then releasing him and his brother without charges. The criminal 2005 subway bombing was carried out by individuals of whom British security had never heard. So why should anyone believe anything issuing from the Blair government about the latest arrests?

The current scare comes at a very convenient time for both Tony Blair and George Bush. Each administration has faced growing popular opposition to their neocolonial occupation of Iraq, as that country plunges ever downward in a bloody spiral, as well as increasing skepticism over demands to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of “national security.” So now they’re grabbing at a new oppor-

tunity to try to ram through more draconian measures.

New York Times Magazine (20 August) writer Christopher Caldwell noted that even before the arrests, Blair had stated that “civil liberty arguments are not so much wrong as just made for another age.” Caldwell chillingly laid out Blair’s meaning: forget about “the rights of defendants”—the British state will no longer even pretend “to build bridges between communities and classes.” Blair’s New Labour government had already enacted laws allowing “terror suspects” to be held for 28 days without charges. Following the arrests, Bush’s Homeland Security chief, Michael Chertoff, lauded Britain’s “ability to hold people for a period of time” as “a tremendous advantage,” and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales called for a “side-by-side review of American and

British counterterrorism laws” (*New York Times*, 15 August). Of course, Britain doesn’t have a Constitution. No doubt Gonzales & Co. would find it more convenient if Bush were simply made King.

The Democratic Party seized on the London events to grab the mantle of “national security” for themselves in the run-up to the November Congressional elections. As the *New York Times* (11 August) reported, “Democrats attacked Republicans as failing to improve airline security and, most of all, argued that the decision to invade Iraq had been a distraction that depleted United States resources and allowed the world to become more dangerous.” In fact, the terrorist followers of Osama bin Laden—Washington’s Frankenstein’s monster—and the like are responding in their own distorted way to the ravages of U.S. imperialism.

The “war on terror” is nothing but a pretext for imperialist wars abroad and for a war at home against the rights of not only immigrants, but also the black population and ultimately the working people as a whole. Immediately following the August 10 arrests, U.S. police and customs officials manipulated the hysteria to not only hassle passengers—even seizing orthotics and lubricated condoms!—but also to treat workers in the airline industry as potential “enemies within.” Already subject to union-busting attacks, airport workers suddenly faced new rules and restrictions, some of which were dropped after airline executives screamed they were costing big bucks. And the Bush administration received a setback when a black federal judge in Detroit ruled on August 17 that the National Security Agency’s warrantless wiretapping program is unconstitutional.

As we pointed out at the onset of the “war on terror,” what the capitalist rulers get away with will be determined by class and social struggle. What is crucial is to mobilize the social power of the labor movement to fight against the rulers’ imperialist military adventures abroad and their attacks on our rights at home. ■

of the pro-Zionist barrage. He told one reporter, “I come out of Ireland and know about the right to self-determination. You can’t have self-determination without a viable state.” Indeed, there are many parallels between Israel’s oppression of the Palestinians and the long history of Britain’s suppression of Irish national rights.

As defenders of the Palestinian people and opponents of Israel’s blitzkrieg in Lebanon, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste stands with CUPE Ontario against the Zionist-orchestrated anti-union offensive. At the same time, we oppose the political strategy of calling for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel promoted by the CUPE Ontario resolution. Such a strategy is not merely ineffective: it is counterposed to the only road to social and national liberation for the oppressed Palestinians, which lies through the *class struggle* of the international proletariat.

The CUPE Ontario resolution appeals to “international law,” i.e., the United Nations. A CUPE Ontario call to join an August 12 protest at the Israeli consulate prominently includes the slogan “Support UN Peacekeeping.” And in a July 31 letter to Stephen Harper, Sid Ryan calls for the Canadian government to stop backing Israel and return to “the proud history and tradition of Canada’s role as an international peacekeeper.”

The UN and the Canadian imperialist rulers are not and have never been “peacekeepers”! From the 1950-53 Korean War to the starvation sanctions that killed 1.5 million Iraqis, the UN has acted as a tool of imperialist depredation around the world. It was the UN that disarmed Palestinian fighters during Lebanon’s 1975-90 civil war, setting up the 1982 massacre of 2,000 civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Christian rightist forces

directed by Israeli troops under the leadership of Ariel Sharon. Under successive Liberal and Tory governments, Canadian UN troops have for decades acted as border guards for the Zionist rulers, including today in south Lebanon. Against the current Israeli attack on Lebanon, we stand in military defense of Hezbollah without giving that reactionary fundamentalist outfit any political support whatsoever. *No to UN intervention!*

Campaigns for divestment and sanctions sow illusions that pressuring the Canadian government, corporations and campus administrations will produce a more benevolent policy toward the Palestinians. This is often promoted as a “peaceful” alternative to military defense of the Palestinians against Israel’s rampage. What is urgently needed is the mobilization of the working class in this country (and in the U.S. and elsewhere) in concrete acts of solidarity with the besieged Palestinian and Lebanese masses—for example, refusing to handle military goods to Israel and organizing

material aid to the Palestinians.

This perspective can only be realized by mobilizing workers *against* their own rulers, not by fostering illusions in the supposed benevolence of the imperialist state. While defending CUPE Ontario against the Zionist hysteria, reformist left groups like the International Socialists (I.S.) and Communist Party (CP) have uncritically backed the calls for sanctions and divestment. This reflects their own dead-end stance of pushing the Canadian rulers to take a stand against their senior partners in Washington. Typical is a July 15 statement by the Canadian Peace Alliance, whose steering committee includes I.S. and CP supporters, demanding “in the name of humanitarianism and Canada’s historic diplomatic role that our government reverse its shameful support for US and Israeli aggression.”

As revolutionary Marxists, we advance the perspective of a socialist federation of the Near East. That requires struggle by the Arab, Hebrew-speaking and other working classes of the region to smash the Zionist state and the despotic regimes in



**April 5:
Suffering under
Israeli and
imperialist
sanctions,
Palestinians
in Gaza
plead for aid at
World Food
Program office.**

the surrounding Arab countries. We defend the Palestinians in their struggle against Zionist rampage and occupation. However, as long as the conflict remains one of nation against nation, the Palestinians can only lose out to the heavily armed (including with nuclear weapons) and more technologically advanced Zionist state.

At bottom, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of interpenetrated peoples, two populations laying claim to the same small piece of land. There can be no equitable resolution to the conflicting national claims of the Palestinians and Hebrew-speaking people under capitalism. It is necessary to break the Hebrew-speaking proletariat from Zionist chauvinism and the Palestinians from Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. That requires the construction of Leninist-Trotskyist parties committed to the overthrow of capitalist rule in Israel and throughout the region. We have no illusions that this will be an easy task. Winning the Hebrew-speaking proletariat to champion defense of the Palestinians will likely require a historic event like the victory of social revolution in another country in the Near East extending a hand of proletarian internationalism to the Israeli workers.

From North America to the Near East, a *class* axis of struggle is desperately needed. Here in Canada, we fight to break the working class from the grip of the pro-capitalist NDP and labour bureaucracy, winning it to champion the cause of the oppressed—from the Palestinians abroad to immigrants, Native people and the Québécois at home. In the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party, the proletariat will become conscious of its power as a class to sweep away the rapacious, war-mad capitalist system through socialist revolution. ■

Spartacist Forums

Capitalist Rulers Left Blacks, Poor to Die New Orleans: One Year After Katrina Racist Atrocity Continues

**Speaker: Barry James, Spartacist League
with a guest speaker from New Orleans
and an update on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal**

**Saturday, Sept. 16, 3 p.m.
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(Take the No. 1 subway to Franklin St., walk west on Franklin to Hudson, one block south on Hudson to Harrison)

NEW YORK

For more information: (212) 267-1025 or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

Against Capitalists’ Divide-and-Rule! The Fight for Immigrant Rights and Black Liberation

Speaker: Don Alexander, Spartacist League Central Committee

Saturday, Sept. 16, 3 p.m.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Geneva Room, 3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(One block west of Wilshire/Vermont Red Line Station)

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(2 blocks from the Oakland City Center/12th St. BART Station)

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Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State!

For Proletarian Political Revolution!



Left: Hu Jintao, now Chinese president, visiting Wall Street, April 2002. Right: Tianwang Textile Factory workers struck for almost seven weeks in 2004 against Hong Kong bosses after privatization of plant.

China's "Market Reforms"

—A Trotskyist Analysis—

We print below the second and concluding part of this article. Part One appeared in WV No. 874 (4 August).

PART TWO

Martin Hart-Landsberg and Paul Burkett have very little to say about China in the Mao era in *China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle* (which originally appeared as a lengthy article in *Monthly Review*, July-August 2004). And that little is confused and contradictory. They concede that "at the time of Mao's death in 1976, the Chinese people remained far from achieving the promises of socialism." But since a main theme of theirs is that capitalism has been "restored" in China, they clearly regard Mao's China as socialist in some sense and as qualitatively different from and better than what exists in China today. In their rejoinder to Victor Lippit, which appeared in *Critical Asian Studies* (37:4 [2005]), they write of "China's movement away from socialism."

For his part, Lippit argues in the round-table discussion of *China and Socialism* that appeared in *Critical Asian Studies* (37:3 [2005]): "Such a system cannot be called 'socialism'; my own preference is to use the term 'statism'." Moreover, he maintains that socialism is not possible in the present historical epoch, especially in economically backward countries. Like Hart-Landsberg and Burkett, he does not define what he means by socialism. From the context he clearly means something close to full communism: a society in which the productivity of labor has reached a level sufficient to overcome economic scarcity.

Despite their profession of a Marxist theoretical framework, Hart-Landsberg and Burkett evidently do not consider the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be relevant in understanding post-1949 China. Yet Karl Marx developed this

concept to explain a post-revolutionary society still characterized by economic scarcity and inequality, differential wage labor and a coercive state apparatus:

"What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it....

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."

—*Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875); emphasis in original

Manifestly, the People's Republic of China, from Mao Zedong to Hu Jintao, was and is very different from the normative concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat developed by Marx in the latter part of the 19th century. China is a nationally isolated and bureaucratically ruled workers state in an economically backward country confronting hostile and more powerful capitalist-imperialist states.

As is well known, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels believed that proletarian revolutions would first occur in West Europe and would then extend to North America. Hence, they envisioned the dictatorship of the proletariat as a relatively brief, harmonious transition to socialism. The actual course of history, beginning with the first successful socialist revolution in economically backward Russia in 1917, turned out to be more complex and contradictory. Nonetheless, the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky never thought that socialism could be built in Russia alone. In fact,

they directed their entire activity, from the founding of the Third International on, to the construction of revolutionary workers parties across the globe to lead the struggle for the proletarian overthrow of capitalist rule internationally.

However, the failure of international revolution, particularly the defeat of the 1923 German revolution, and the increasing isolation of the young Soviet workers republic, combined with the devastation of World War I and the Civil War, laid the material basis for the growth of nationalist bureaucratism. Beginning in 1923-24, the Soviet Union underwent a bureaucratic-nationalist degeneration under the increasingly despotic rule of Joseph Stalin. Nonetheless, Soviet global power remained a partial counterweight to world imperialism, thus making possible the Chinese Revolution of 1949 and the consolidation of the bureaucratically deformed workers state that emerged from it. During the Korean War of the early 1950s, the U.S. rulers not only threatened but actually considered using nuclear weapons against Red China. They did not do so mainly for fear that this might lead to war with a nuclear-armed USSR.

The victory of the Communist-led, peasant-based "Red Armies" over the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang in 1949 destroyed the military apparatus of the semicolonial Chinese capitalist state. Chiang Kai-shek and his cohorts fled with the remnants of their armed forces to the island of Taiwan under the protection of American imperialism. The new Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime immediately established a monopoly of political power and organization. The Chinese bourgeoisie was thus politically expropriated, and a few years later the economy was nationalized. At the same time, any movement on the part of the working class toward independent political activity was ruthlessly suppressed.

Mao and his colleagues proceeded to construct a state modeled in its basic economic and political structures on the Soviet Union under Stalin.

Mao's China: Ideology and Reality

During the 1960s, Maoism, with its appeals to egalitarianism, mass mobilizations and moral as against material incentives, was attractive for many left-wing intellectuals around the world. Hart-Landsberg and Burkett reprise that attitude, though they are much more critical of Mao's China than was the earlier generation of Western Maoist intellectuals, such as Paul Sweezy. Still, they describe China in the Mao era as "achieving full employment, basic social security, and generalized equality for Chinese working people."

Certainly, income distribution in China was far more egalitarian than in the neocolonial capitalist countries of Asia like India and Indonesia. But it was not more egalitarian than in the Soviet Union in this period, and was actually less so in certain important respects. In the mid 1950s, China instituted a wage and salary structure in state-owned enterprises modeled on that of the Soviet Union, and that structure was maintained throughout the Mao era. The income ratio of the top administrative grade to the lowest working-class grade was 15 to 1. Moreover, as in the USSR, high-level party and government functionaries, enterprise managers and the like in China could and did supplement their official income through various forms of parasitism and corruption.

The widening socioeconomic gulf between rural and urban China did not begin with the market-oriented "reforms" of Deng Xiaoping. It was already pronounced in the last years of the Mao era. Between 1952 and 1975, the non-agricultural population's average per cap-

ita consumption increased by 83 percent compared to only 41 percent for rural toilers (Carl Riskin, *China's Political Economy: The Quest for Development since 1949* [1987]). In 1980 (at the start of the “reform” era), city dwellers consumed 60 percent more food grain per capita and ate almost two and a half times as much meat as members of the rural communes. The difference in ownership of manufactured consumer goods (e.g., watches, sewing machines, radios) was even greater. Overall, average consumption in urban China was two to three times as much as in the countryside.

By contrast, in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and '70s there was an appreciable *narrowing* of the gap between the living standards of the rural and urban populace. A large fraction of collective farms voluntarily transformed themselves into state farms whose workers received uniform wages and benefits not dependent upon fluctuating agricultural output and government procurement prices. By the early 1980s, the earnings of farmers in the USSR were actually increasing at a faster rate than those of factory and office workers. This greater degree of egalitarianism was possible only because the Soviet Union had by then attained a productive level far greater than that of China.

The economic strategy pursued by the CCP bureaucracy during the Mao era was basically similar to that of Stalin's Russia in the 1930s. Consumption levels of both peasants and workers were held down to maximize the economic surplus, which was then concentrated in heavy industrial investment. Between 1952 and 1975, industrial growth averaged 11 percent a year. At the beginning of this period, industrial output accounted for 20 percent of China's net material product; at the end, the figure was 45 percent. The construction of a substantial, relatively modern heavy industrial sector



René Burri

Members of agricultural commune near Shanghai, 1964.

deliveries of grain and other agricultural produce at artificially low prices. In addition, the real wages of urban workers were essentially frozen for two decades. The American left-wing intellectual Maurice Meisner, who is generally quite sympathetic to Mao's China, nonetheless recognized:

“As consumption and popular living standards suffered, the accumulation rate rose to maintain the high pace of heavy industrial development. Without real gains in productivity, it is unlikely that these high levels of accumulation and investment could have been sustained much longer without further impoverishing the population.”

—*The Deng Xiaoping Era: An Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese Socialism, 1978-1994* (1996)

In their condemnation of China during the “reform” era, Hart-Landsberg and Burkett ascribe great importance to the elimination of guaranteed lifetime

off to the rural communes, forcibly separating them from family and friends. If they had been given a choice, how many of these youths do Hart-Landsberg and Burkett think would have opted to work on a collective farm rather than take almost any job in the city where they lived, even if it didn't come with a lifetime guarantee and was paid below the prevailing wage? By the last years of the Mao era, the rural communes had become a massive reservoir of disguised unemployment and underemployment.

Part of the purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to cut back the living conditions of the working class in the name of a phony “socialist egalitarianism.” Furthermore, guaranteed lifetime employment in a *given enterprise* was not economically rational and increasingly impeded maximizing labor productivity through new investment. A large fraction of China's industrial plant was built during the First (and most successful) Five Year Plan in the mid 1950s. This embodied the most up-to-date technology then available to China via the Soviet Union. By the 1970s, many industrial enterprises had become technologically obsolescent. Maximizing labor productivity for a given level of investment required shutting some enterprises and replacing them with new ones or retooling with newer, labor-saving technologies. In either case, a large number of specific, existing jobs would be eliminated.

A genuinely socialist government would re-employ the redundant workers elsewhere at comparable wages and benefits, including providing relocation and retraining at state expense. Of course, Deng and his successors did not do that. Workers laid off from state-owned enterprises were left to fend for themselves, and many suffered real deprivation. But then again, the Mao regime effectively kept real wages frozen for two decades through bureaucratic commandism and police-state repression.

The market-oriented reforms initiated by Deng were an attempt to address within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism the inefficiencies of bureaucratic commandism. As we wrote in the 1980s:

“Within the framework of Stalinism, there is thus an inherent tendency to

replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency.”

—“For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy,” WV No. 454, 3 June 1988; reprinted in *“Market Socialism” in Eastern Europe* (July 1988)

Contradictions of the “Reform” Era

When Mao died, China, while having constructed a substantial, relatively modern heavy industrial sector, was still a predominantly rural, peasant country. Over three-quarters of the labor force was engaged in farming and over 80 percent of the population lived in the countryside. One impetus for the “market reforms” was that agricultural output had failed to keep pace with industrial growth; indeed, the low level of agricultural productivity was a fundamental barrier to rapid and extensive industrialization. Today, over 50 percent of the labor force is employed in manufacturing, construction, transport and the service sector, and 40 percent of the population is urbanized. From a Marxist standpoint, this is a *progressive* development of historic import. So too is the corresponding quantitative and qualitative expansion of China's industrial capacity.

At the same time, the policies of the Beijing Stalinists have victimized and immiserated significant sections of the working class and rural toilers, widened the gulf between rural and urban China, spawned a class of capitalist entrepreneurs with familial and financial ties to the CCP officialdom as well as offshore Chinese capitalists, and generated an affluent managerial/professional/technocratic stratum enjoying Westernized lifestyles.

Hart-Landsberg and Burkett on the one side and Lippit on the other express the opposite poles of that contradiction. The former select evidence to argue that everything has gotten worse for the working people of China. They point to the stark and increasing social inequalities, the growth of urban unemployment, the deterioration in public health care and primary education. Lippit selects evidence in the opposite direction. He points out that the large majority of working people—rural as well as urban—have experienced a considerable improvement in their living standards, though at greatly uneven rates. He cites studies showing that hundreds of millions of peasants have been lifted out of poverty during the past few decades.

In neither *China and Socialism* nor in their rejoinder to Lippit do Hart-Landsberg and Burkett cite the easily accessible statistics indicating the basic measure of changing economic conditions of the working class. Between 1979 and 1998 there was an average annual increase in the price-adjusted earnings of manufacturing workers of 4 percent. Only in 1988 and 1989 was there a decrease because of the exceptionally high rate of inflation at that time. Between 1999 and 2002 (according to the 2003 *China Labor*

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Young Spartacus

April 2001 Berkeley protest against ROTC.

during the Mao era laid the basis for the high rates of economic growth and the overall improvement in living standards under Deng and his successors. However, the highly capital-intensive nature of this industrial investment limited the expansion of the urban working class and the corresponding reduction in the social weight of the peasantry. Between 1952 and 1975, the non-agricultural component of the labor force only increased from 16 to 23 percent.

By the last years of the Mao era, the regime's economic strategy was encountering increasing obstacles and contradictions while generating popular discontent. In large measure due to the inefficiencies of bureaucratic commandism, labor productivity had stagnated since the mid 1950s, rising less than 1 percent per year. To offset this, an ever-larger fraction of total national income was expended on investment in heavy industry, rising from 24 percent in the mid 1950s to 33 percent in the early 1970s. The massive economic resources devoted to industrial expansion were mainly extracted from the peasantry through heavy taxation and compulsory

employment in state-owned enterprises as a decisive step toward the supposed restoration of capitalism. They write in their rejoinder to Lippit: “Such material insecurity is, in fact, the essence of capitalism's social separation of workers from the conditions of their production.”

Certainly, Chinese workers regarded guaranteed lifetime employment and benefits (called the “iron rice bowl”) as one of the main social gains of the 1949 Revolution. However, a country as poor and economically backward as China obviously could not provide hundreds of millions of peasants with jobs in state-owned industrial enterprises, much less ones that were guaranteed for life and at a level of wages and benefits two to three times that of the income of members of the rural communes.

In order to maintain social order, the CCP regime during the Mao era forcibly prevented peasants from migrating to the cities in search of jobs. Moreover, the regime did not provide jobs in the state sector to all members of the increasing urban labor force. During the Cultural Revolution, some 17 million urban youths upon graduating from school were shipped

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THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

FROM THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION TO THE JULY DAYS

We print below, edited for publication, the second and concluding part of a class given by comrade T. Marlow as part of a series of educationals on Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* (1932), which was held in January of this year as a Spartacist League young cadre school. The first part appears in WV No. 874, 4 August.

PART TWO

During the February Revolution and the subsequent month, Lenin was still in exile in Switzerland, desperately trying to find a way to get to Russia. During March, the attitude of the Bolshevik leaders in Russia came very close to the position of the Mensheviks. On March 15, *Pravda*, then edited by Stalin, Kamenev and Muranov, carried an article which declared:

"Our slogan is not the empty cry 'Down with war!' which means the disorganization of the revolutionary army and of the army that is becoming ever more revolutionary. Our slogan is bring pressure [!] to bear on the Provisional Government so as to compel it to make, without fail, openly and before the eyes of world democracy [!], an attempt [!] to induce [!] all the warring countries to initiate immediate negotiations to end the world war. Till then let everyone [!] remain at his post [!]." [Trotsky's emphases]

—Leon Trotsky, *Lessons of October* (1924)

This article was wholly in the spirit of the "revolutionary" defensism of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (SRs)—i.e., the Russian Revolution had achieved the main task of overthrowing the monarchy, and the "revolution" and its "free people" had to defend themselves against the German Kaiser. What this really meant was that the war aims of the Russian bourgeoisie would continue, now under the cover of "democracy" rather than the Romanov eagle. This defensism stood in stark contrast to the position of revolutionary defeatism advocated by Lenin and the Bolsheviks during WWI. In opposition to the Mensheviks and the social-democratic leaders throughout Europe who either outright supported their own imperialist ruling class, or begged the imperialists for a just peace, Lenin maintained that the working class had no side in the interimperialist war and that the only road to peace was for the working class of each of the belligerent nations to turn the imperialist war into a civil war to overthrow the capitalist rulers.

A measure of how far the Bolsheviks had gone toward conciliating the Mensheviks following the February Revolution



Menshevik-organized demonstration in Petrograd, 18 June 1917. Bolshevik banner (middle) reads: "Long Live Social Revolution." Predominance of Bolshevik slogans reflected growing influence of party among workers, soldiers.

tion was that, as Trotsky notes in his *History*, in some of the provinces the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had entered into united organizations. In fact, party leaders such as Stalin were advocating fusion with the Mensheviks at the beginning of the April party conference. As you should recognize, Lenin had his work cut out for him.

Lenin had made many key positions clear in his "Letters from Afar" of March. He was explicit that any conciliation of defensism vis-à-vis the imperialist war was a split question. In his *History*, Trotsky cites a March letter from Lenin: "Our party would disgrace itself forever, kill itself politically, if it took part in such deceit.... I would choose an immediate split with no matter whom in our party, rather than surrender to social patriotism...." In any case, the speech Lenin gave upon his arrival in Petrograd on April 3 on the socialist character of the Russian Revolution should have been less

of a surprise to the Bolsheviks than it apparently was.

Lenin's Fight to Rarm the Party

On April 4, Lenin presented the brilliant theses now known as the "April Theses." In the space of only a few pages, Lenin reasserted the strategic aims of the Bolsheviks, from which they had been sliding, and promulgated a whole new tactical orientation for the party. This included the abandonment of old slogans, such as the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," in favor of a direct struggle for proletarian power in Russia. In doing so, Lenin repudiated in practice the faulty formula of a two-class dictatorship, arriving at essentially the same conception of the Russian Revolution as Trotsky had outlined as early as 1905 and which became known as the theory of permanent revolution. Trotsky understood that the completion of the democratic revolution in backward Russia was conceivable only as the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry, and that the seizure of power by the working class in Russia would place on the order of the day not only the democratic, but also the socialist tasks. This would give a powerful impetus to international socialist revolution, which was necessary for the development of socialism in Russia. [For further background on the Mensheviks', the Bolsheviks' and Trotsky's conceptions of the Russian Revolution, see: "The Russian Revolution of 1905," WV No. 872, 9 June.]

Lenin's April Theses also called for the construction of a new, revolutionary Third International. The need for a new international and a break with the social-chauvinists, including the wavering centrist elements that followed German social-democratic leader Karl Kautsky,

had been a demand by Lenin since the beginning of the imperialist war.

There was no small opposition to Lenin—he had to wage a *fight* to win over the party, at times even threatening to go outside the Central Committee and appeal directly to the ranks. In short, that posed a faction fight and a split. It is notable that when the April Theses were published in *Pravda* on April 7, not a single member of the Central Committee would cosign Lenin's article. In fact, the editors of *Pravda* wrote: "As for the general scheme of Comrade Lenin, it seems to us unacceptable in that it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is ended, and counts upon an immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution" (quoted in Trotsky's *History*). The seriousness of the situation within the party was well summarized by Trotsky:

"The central organ of the party thus openly announced before the working class and its enemies a split with the generally recognised leader of the party upon the central question of the revolution for which the Bolshevik ranks had been getting ready during a long period of years. That alone is sufficient to show the depth of the April crisis in the party, due to the clash of two irreconcilable lines of thought and action. Until it surmounted this crisis the revolution could not go forward."

Bourgeois-Democratic or Socialist Revolution?

The "Old Bolsheviks," including Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, seemed to believe that the old slogan of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" had been realized in some amalgam of the Provisional Government and the soviets—later, in October of 1917, Zinoviev and Kamenev, in opposition to the Central Committee vote for armed insurrection, would explicitly proclaim that: "The Constituent Assembly plus the soviets—that is that combined type of state institution towards which we are going" (quoted in *Lessons of October*). That would have been the death of the Russian Revolution.

Before the convocation of the all-Russian conference of the Bolshevik Party on April 24, events in Petrograd strongly underlined that Lenin's reorientation of the party was correct and overdue. Perhaps as a slap in the face to the soviets, on April 18, Miliukov, leader of the Kadets and at that point the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government, made public a letter reaffirming Russia's commitment to the imperialist war. On the Western calendar this occurred on May 1—the international workers holiday. On that day in Petrograd there were peaceful and celebratory demonstrations. Miliukov's letter provoked deep outrage among the masses of Petrograd, and on April 20, as Trotsky describes in his *History*: "The masses came out with arms in their hands. Among the bayonets of the soldiers glimmered the letters on a streamer: 'Down with Miliukov!'" Trotsky goes on to note: "The slogan carried into the streets by the armed soldiers and sailors: 'Down with the Provisional Government!' inevitably introduced into the demonstration a strain of armed insurrection."

This was a far cry from the almost festive demonstration of only a month before when 800,000 came out for the funeral of the martyrs of the February Revolution. The April 20 demonstration was not to be the last time that the Petrograd masses came out, arms in hand, with the evident

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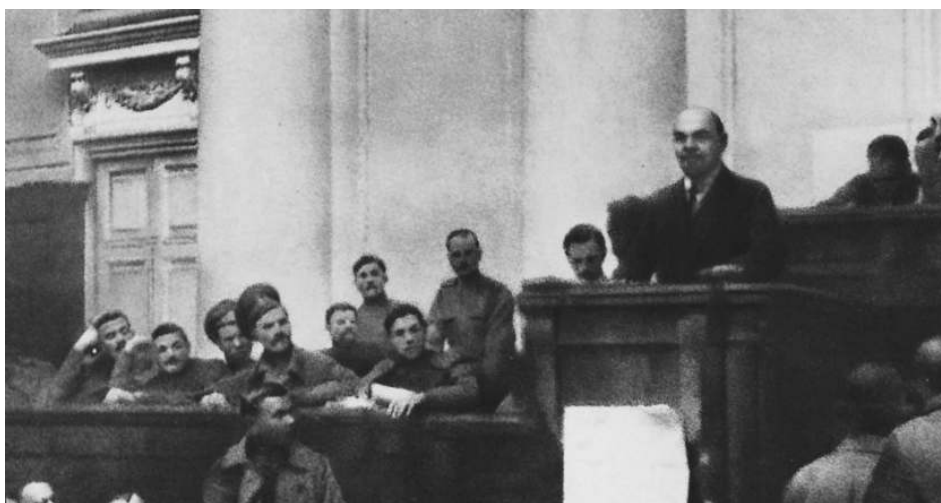
intent to seize state power but without the leadership to carry the struggle to victory. That leadership would only be in place in October.

So the Bolshevik conference convened alongside a serious revolutionary manifestation of the Petrograd workers—and this was keenly felt by the Bolshevik workers inside the plants and in the lower-level soviets. Lenin was above all an astute politician! As Trotsky relates in *Lessons of October*:

“This manner of formulating the question is most highly significant. Lenin, after the experience of the reconnoiter, withdrew the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government. But he did not withdraw it for any set period of time—for so many weeks or months—but strictly in dependence upon how quickly the revolt of the masses against the conciliationists would grow.... He based himself exclusively on the idea that the masses were not at the moment capable of overthrowing the Provisional Government and that, therefore, everything possible had to be done to enable the working class to overthrow the Provisional Government on the morrow.

“The whole of the April Party Conference was devoted to the following fundamental question: Are we heading toward the conquest of power in the name of the socialist revolution or are we helping (anybody and everybody) to complete the democratic revolution? Unfortunately, the report of the April Conference remains unpublished to this very day, though there is scarcely another congress in the history of our party that had such an exceptional and immediate bearing on the destiny of our revolution as the conference of April 1917.

“Lenin’s position was this: an irreconcilable struggle against defensism and its supporters; the capture of the soviet



P.I. Volkov

Lenin gives speech to Petrograd Soviet, April 1917.

sie to the left.’ This theme was developed with a particularly boring profundity by Martynov. With the inception of the bourgeois revolution in 1917, the Mensheviks soon found themselves on the staff of the government. Out of their entire ‘principled’ position there remained only one political conclusion, namely, that the proletariat dare not seize power.”

On May 1, the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet voted to enter the coalition government. As a gesture to the masses, Miliukov was forced to resign as foreign minister the next day. (In his *History*, Trotsky notes one proposal by an SR leader to defuse the crisis precipitated by Miliukov’s note: “Chernov found a brilliant solution, proposing that Miliukov go over to the Ministry of Public Education. Constantinople as a topic in geography would at any rate be less dangerous than as a topic in diplomacy.”) Miliukov’s res-

eleven people at the table whether they preferred “Wilhelm or the Bolsheviks.” The vote was ten to one for Wilhelm.”

This would not be the first time in history that the bourgeoisie became defeatist—just look at the Paris Commune. In the aftermath of the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the workers took power in Paris to defend the city. Thiers and all the great French patriots then began to beg for Bismarck, their enemy of yesterday, to intervene. With the assistance of the Prussians, the bourgeois French army was allowed to first bombard, and then enter, Paris. In the repression that followed, tens of thousands of Communards and workers were either executed on the spot or imprisoned. And note that the crushing of the Commune of 1871 was not so far distant in time in 1917—it’s less than the span of time separating us today from the end of World War II.

A Shift in the Balance of Forces

The Bolsheviks issued a call for a demonstration in June while the Congress of Soviets was in session. This was not intended to be a call for an insurrection, although the impetus came from the Bolshevik military organization. No matter, that’s how the Mensheviks and SRs took it, because they knew that the Petrograd masses were shifting to the Bolsheviks. They used their position at the head of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet to pass a resolution prohibiting any demonstrations for three days. Delegates were sent from the Congress of Soviets to the working-class districts—as Trotsky put it, “If the mountain was not allowed to come to the prophet, the prophet at least went to the mountain.”

Not wishing a direct assault against the Soviet, the Bolsheviks stood down. But as Trotsky notes, the emissaries of the Mensheviks and SRs were met with disdain and hostility. One example from the *History*: “The workers of the Putilov factory agreed to paste up the declaration of the congress against the demonstration only after they learned from *Pravda* that it did not contradict the resolution of the Bolsheviks.” This reaction was compara-

tively mild. Elsewhere, the Bolsheviks’ decision was not so easily accepted:

“The masses submitted to the decision of the Bolsheviks, but not without protest and indignation. In certain factories they adopted resolutions of censure of the Central Committee. The more fiery members of the party in the sections tore up their membership cards. That was a serious warning.”

The Mensheviks and SRs were out for blood—shades of things to come in just a few weeks. On June 10, the Menshevik paper declared: “It is time to brand the Leninists as traitors and betrayers of the revolution” (quoted in Trotsky’s *History*). The next day, the Menshevik leader Tseretelli demanded that the Bolsheviks be disarmed. What he really meant was disarming the workers. As Trotsky summarized: “In other words, that classic moment of the revolution had arrived when the bourgeois democracy, upon the demand of the reaction, undertakes to disarm the workers who had guaranteed the revolutionary victory.” Trotsky later notes: “To carry the Compromise policy through to a successful end—that is, to the establishment of a parliamentary rule of the bourgeoisie—demanded the disarming of the workers and soldiers.”

The Mensheviks decided on a public show of force in a demonstration on June 18. The march was to replicate the peaceful parade in March to honor the martyrs of February. At that time, some 800,000 had turned out. This time, half that number marched, but the vast majority were from the factories and barracks. In his *History*, Trotsky describes the procession:

“The first Bolshevik slogans were met half-laughingly—Tseretelli had so confidently thrown down his challenge the day before. But these same slogans were repeated again and again. ‘Down with the Ten Minister-Capitalists!’ ‘Down with the Offensive!’ ‘All Power to the Soviets!’ The ironical smiles froze, and then gradually disappeared. Bolshevik banners floated everywhere. The delegates stopped counting the uncomfortable totals. The triumph of the Bolsheviks was too obvious.... One of the factories carried a placard: ‘The right to Life is Higher than the rights of Private Property.’ This slogan had not been suggested by the party.”

Trotsky went on to note: “The demonstration of June 18 made an enormous impression on its own participants. The masses saw that the Bolsheviks had become a power, and the vacillating were drawn to them.” The contradiction between the growing strength of the Bolsheviks and the decline of the authority of the Menshevik/SR leadership of the Soviet would condition the entire period leading up to the October Revolution.

The July Days

It is interesting to note that in the period from February through June, the Bolsheviks had undergone a virtually uninterrupted growth of influence in the working class and also among the Petrograd garrison. Revolutions rarely occur with such a seamless transition, and Russia in 1917

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Bakhmeteff Archive

Kerensky tries to rally troop morale at the front, 1917.

majority; the overthrow of the Provisional Government; the seizure of power through the soviets; a revolutionary peace policy and a program of socialist revolution at home and of international revolution abroad.”

The First Coalition Government and the June Congress of Soviets

Prior to April, and with the exception of Kerensky, who had joined the Provisional Government as Minister of Justice in March, the Compromiser (SR and Menshevik) leadership of the Soviets had tried to give up the power of the soviets without openly joining the bourgeois government. In early May, the first coalition government was formed. Kerensky (who had joined the SRs after the February Revolution) became the Minister of War. Mensheviks and SRs also took on ministerial posts in the Provisional Government. This was a political betrayal of the mass base of the soviets, but it flowed harmoniously with the basic politics of the Compromisers. As Trotsky relates in *Lessons of October*:

“As a matter of fact, the Mensheviks had for many years tapped away like so many woodpeckers at the idea that the coming revolution must be bourgeois; that the government of a bourgeois revolution could only perform bourgeois tasks; that the social democracy could not take upon itself the tasks of bourgeois democracy and must remain an opposition while ‘pushing the bourgeois-

ignation was just a sop to the masses, since the government continued to carry out the policies of the bourgeoisie, especially with regard to the war.

On June 3, the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened. To give an idea of the masses represented by the soviets, Trotsky writes in his *History* that “The right to a vote was accorded to soviets containing not less than 25,000 men. Soviets containing from 10,000 to 25,000 had a voice.” But it was not the factories and barracks who were in control, but rather the Compromisers who entered the first coalition government in May. One of the “achievements” of this Congress was to give formal approval to a new offensive against the German forces. This ill-fated plan, issued by Kerensky, was in fact the Russian bourgeoisie’s partial payment to the Entente for the massive loans from Britain and France. It is doubtful that any member of the Russian bourgeoisie thought this military attack could succeed. As Trotsky relates in his *History*:

“The American journalist, John Reed, who knew how to see and hear, and who has left an immortal book of chronicler’s notes of the days of the October Revolution, testifies without hesitation that a considerable part of the possessing classes of Russia preferred a German victory to the triumph of the revolution, and did not hesitate to say so openly. ‘One evening I spent at the house of a Moscow merchant,’ says Reed, among other examples. ‘During tea we asked

Government troops occupy Bolshevik headquarters in Kshesinskaya mansion, seized from the party following July Days.



South Africa Permanent Revolution vs. “Two-Stage” Stalinist Betrayal

In 1994, after more than a decade of massive struggles by the predominantly black working class and township poor, the white-supremacist police-state regime in South Africa was replaced by Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress (ANC). The black African, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian working people were promised that their everyday conditions of life would be greatly improved by redistributing the country’s wealth from the affluent white ruling elite. Instead, under the bourgeois-nationalist regimes of Mandela and his successor, Thabo Mbeki, conditions for the working class, rural toilers and township masses have in many important respects gotten worse.

Almost a million workers have been laid off through the privatization of government-owned industry and other kinds of capitalist restructuring. Sixty percent of the adult jobless black African population has never been employed. Two million people have been evicted from their homes because they could not pay the sky-high utility bills, and some ten million have had their electricity and water cut off. At the same time, a small black elite has arisen who drive Mercedes, vacation in Dubai and clink champagne glasses with the Randlords of the Anglo-Gold Ashanti corporation. The income of white families has increased substantially while that of the overwhelming majority of blacks has plummeted.

A key factor in the ANC’s accession to power was the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which for decades had supported the ANC materially and diplomatically. During the Cold War, the ANC and other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois “Third World” movements and regimes were able to play off Moscow and Washington, thereby achieving a certain latitude in which to maneuver. But as the Moscow Stalinist regime under Mikhail Gorbachev fell apart, the ANC leaders openly embraced “power sharing” with the white racist South African rulers, a section of whom accepted that ANC rule no longer posed a threat to the white economic oligarchy. Today, despite the change in the political and judicial superstructure, South Africa remains, as it was under the white-supremacist apartheid system, a country in which the black masses live in Third World poverty while most whites enjoy First World conditions. We have thus described South Africa under the ANC as a neo-apartheid capitalist state.

Nothing more clearly exposes the fact that the ANC-led regime is the enemy of the workers and the oppressed than its response to the AIDS pandemic that has ravaged South Africa. According to the United Nations, in 2005 an estimated 5.5 million South Africans were HIV positive and some 320,000 died from AIDS. Women are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Today, over 39 percent of pregnant women in the province of KwaZulu-Natal test HIV-positive. An effective, scientific response to this crisis has been willfully frustrated by the *criminal policies* of the ANC-led government. Mbeki himself outrageously refuses to

acknowledge the scientific fact that the HIV virus causes AIDS! On August 24, police using pepper spray attacked protesters in Cape Town who, as part of a national day of protest by the Treatment Action Campaign, were calling for the firing of the health minister and demanding that prisoners be treated with anti-retroviral drugs.

A key agency upholding the government is the heavily overlapping leadership of the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). As part of the governing “Tripartite Alliance,” the SACP/COSATU tops keep the country’s powerful and combative work-

ing class tied to the bourgeois nationalists of the ANC, who in turn are the black front men for the dominant white capitalist class. Leading SACP cadres are senior officials in the government, including those branches directly engaged in the brutal repression of labor struggles and township protests: the Security Ministry and the intelligence service.

In the last two years, major labor strikes and militant township protests have signaled growing hostility on the part of the black masses toward the ANC regime. The future of the Tripartite Alliance is now being intensely debated within the workers movement and among broader layers of society. Amid the anger and bit-

ter disillusionment among their working-class supporters, the SACP tops recently came out with a discussion document in which they openly criticized the central ANC leadership (*Bua Komanisi!* Special Edition, May 2006). The document raised the possibility of running candidates in future elections in the party’s own name, within the framework of the Alliance. Such candidacies would have a purely token character, in no way challenging, much less weakening, the ANC’s governmental power. The document categorically rejects “watering down the ANC’s overwhelming electoral majority.”

Along somewhat similar lines, the COSATU bureaucrats have issued a discussion document (“COSATU Political Discussion Document—Possibilities for Fundamental Social Change”) in preparation for a congress in September strongly condemning the “neoliberal” policies of the Mbeki regime. It points out that the share of national income going to the workers has decreased while the share raked off in corporate profits has markedly increased. Nonetheless, the COSATU misleaders cite favorably surveys through 2004 that “have confirmed that the overwhelming majority of COSATU members support COSATU’s approach of strategic engagement from within the Alliance.”

The sordid reality behind the ideological claptrap of the SACP document is the maneuvering inside the ANC itself. The SACP/COSATU tops are backing Mbeki’s main factional opponent, Jacob Zuma. Mbeki’s former deputy president, Zuma combines a “man of the people” posture with appeals to Zulu tribalist nationalism.

The SACP leaders have always used the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of “two-stage revolution” as an ideological justification for their historic alliance and interpenetration with the ANC. According to this schema, conditions are not currently ready for socialism. Therefore, first must come a political bloc with “progressive” bourgeois nationalists, which in South Africa is called the “National Democratic Revolution” (NDR). Then, some far-off and unspecified time later, this will evolve into socialism. Thus the recent document asserted “the inextricable linkage between the NDR and the imperative of ‘building socialism now’,” while reaffirming “our commitment to the ANC-led Alliance.”

South Africa’s black workers and poor know damn well that the country is not moving toward socialism but in the opposite direction: toward increasingly brutal capitalist exploitation and immiseration. The SACP leadership is in some difficulty as it has failed to produce the gains it promised the masses. Hence, in order to repair the damaged credibility of the Alliance, the SACP/COSATU tops have adopted a more leftist stance toward the Mbeki regime while promising to fight for more worker-friendly policies. This is a cynical political con game. In order to go forward in its struggles, the working class must break with the ANC-led Alliance and with the reformist politics of class collaboration packaged as



Reuters

May 18: Johannesburg rally during one-day COSATU general strike protesting unemployment, poverty.



AP

Cape Town, August 18: Treatment Action Campaign activists protest government’s criminal AIDS policies, call for resignation and arrest of health minister.

Break with the Bourgeois ANC—No Support to Mbeki, Zuma! Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

the National Democratic Revolution.

In opposing the “two-stage revolution” schema—a formula for class betrayal—Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, stands for the program and perspective of permanent revolution developed by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. This posits that in countries of combined and uneven development, the outstanding democratic tasks historically associated with the bourgeois revolutions can only be carried out through the assumption of power by the working class. In South Africa, genuine national liberation and the destruction of black oppression require proletarian revolution and its extension to the advanced capitalist (imperialist) countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. In fighting for that goal, we seek to build a Leninist revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that would champion the cause of the vast unemployed urban masses, the landless, immigrants, women, agricultural laborers and all of those oppressed under neo-apartheid capitalism.

Upsurge in Labor Struggles, Township Protests

All too little has changed in the “new” South Africa. Retaining an ironclad grip on the economic resources of the country (mines, banks, factories and land), the white bourgeoisie subcontracts out the task of administering the capitalist state to the ANC.

Last year saw the largest strike wave since the ANC assumed power, as workers protested starvation wages in the face of booming profits and fat bonuses to management. Militant actions by South African Airlines workers grounded both domestic and international flights, stunning the company by their determination and the level of public support. In the first national mine workers strike since the late 1980s, 100,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers shut down the gold sector, supported in an important (and unprecedented) action by two historically white craft unions.

In June 2005, COSATU called a one-day general strike against unemployment and poverty, supposedly meant to launch a series of rolling mass actions. A rally at Johannesburg Library Gardens was characterized by heightened anti-ANC sentiment. When the COSATU bureaucrats persisted in raising desperate cries of “Viva ANC! Viva!”, a large section of the crowd of up to 50,000 replied “Phansi!” (Down!).

For the past two years, a wave of protests—mainly over lack of water, electricity and decent housing—has swept South Africa. The most dramatic upheaval occurred in the Merafong township of Khutsong on the West Rand, where residents called for a boycott of the local elections in March 2006 and turned the area into a “no go zone” for the ruling party. When Defense Minister and ANC national chairman Mosiuoa “Terror” Lekota attempted to call a pro-government rally, he was greeted with chants of “voetsek” (f--k off).

In the township of Soshanguve, north of Pretoria, residents used rakes, spades and building tools to drive off security guards who had dismantled their shacks the night before. Police then arrived and fired on the crowd with rubber bullets and stun grenades. In Durban, a march by the Shack Dwellers Movement, which organized an electoral boycott, was attacked by the cops. Protesters were beaten while in police custody. These scenes of revolt and repression take place almost daily in the “new” South Africa.

Jacob Zuma: Anti-Working-Class Politician

The SACP and COSATU tops have sought to deflect the growing anger against the government among the working class and township poor into support for the Zuma “camp” of the ANC. When Mbeki dismissed Zuma as deputy president in June 2005, the COSATU leadership, the SACP and the ANC Youth and Women’s leagues came to his defense. Mbeki is widely viewed as a coldblooded, arrogant

technocrat whose main priority is placating the white corporate elite and their imperialist senior partners, as well as their black junior partners. But as a bourgeois politician and Zulu traditionalist, Zuma is no less a class enemy of the proletariat than Mbeki. Criminally, the SACP/COSATU tops have told the working class to take sides in a power struggle between two bourgeois politicians whose reactionary politics are *indistinguishable*. Opposing Mbeki is not the same as opposing class collaboration with the bourgeois ANC. *Break with the ANC! Forge a revolutionary workers party!*

The obscenity of the SACP’s pro-Zuma position became utterly manifest during his recent trial for the rape of an HIV-positive woman, which resulted in his acquittal. In his trial testimony, Zuma ignorantly proclaimed that he showered after sex to minimize the chance of catching AIDS! Meanwhile, his supporters paraded outside the courthouse carrying the slogans “Burn the Bitch” and “100% Zulu-



AFF



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boy.” Disgustingly, the Young Communist League joined the pro-Zuma protests, rendering absolutely contemptible the SACP’s claims to stand against Mbeki’s HIV denialism and against women’s oppression.

One of the most sinister aspects of these events was their fostering of tribalist enmities. Many Zulus and others saw Zuma’s dismissal as an anti-Zulu plot by Mbeki and other Xhosa central leaders of the ANC. The historically Xhosa region of the Eastern Cape in fact contains some of the most destitute areas in the country. In reality, the ANC represents the interests of the (overwhelmingly white) capitalist class against workers of all racial and ethnic groups: Zulu, Xhosa and other black Africans, Indian, coloured and white. Since coming to power, the ANC has increasingly worked to pit different sectors of the oppressed against each other.

The Tripartite Alliance: A Nationalist Popular Front

The Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, SACP and COSATU is a nationalist popular front in which the power of the African working class is held in check by its subordination to the supposedly “progressive” national bourgeoisie. The SACP’s class-collaborationist alliance with the bourgeois ANC goes back at least to the 1930s. The central purpose of the SACP discussion document is to provide a theoretical and historical rationale for maintaining the Alliance.

According to the document, the post-1994 period was a “democratic breakthrough” opening up progressive possibilities under the ANC regime. Focusing its criticism overwhelmingly on the GEAR policy—an anti-worker austerity plan implemented in 1996 under Mandela to attract foreign investment and boost profits—the document argues: “*Relative to*

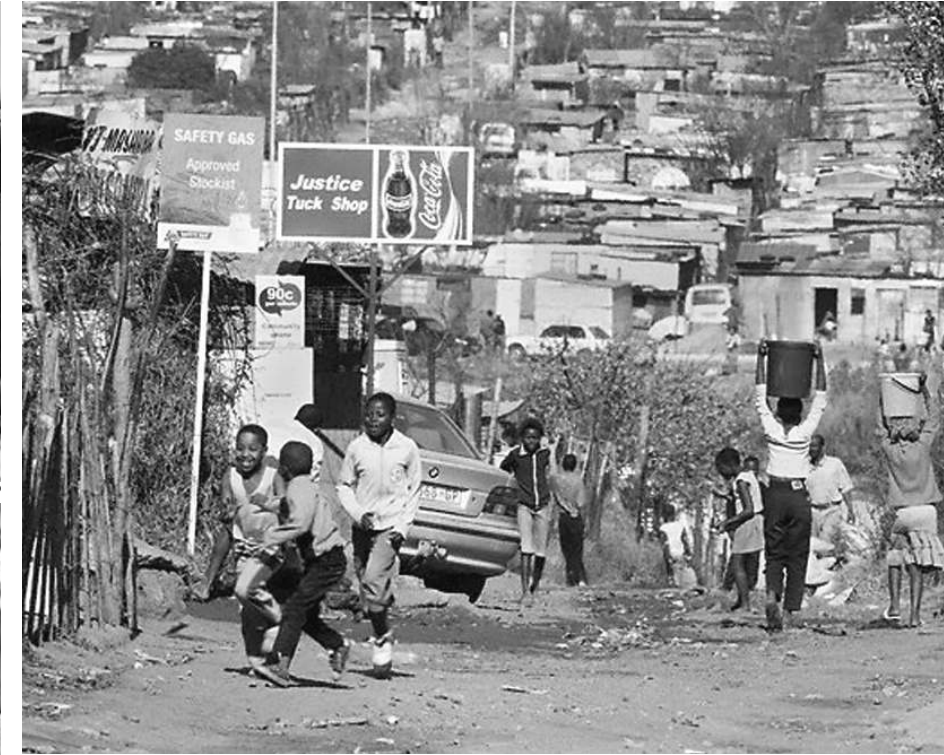
the transformational potential of the 1994 conjuncture, this project [GEAR] represents a serious strategic setback for the working class (and the national democratic revolution)” (emphasis in original). The document draws the conclusion that it is necessary to rebuild a mass-based ANC in order to fight for a “progressive developmental” (i.e., capitalist) state.

Even on its own terms, this account whitewashes the fact that the SACP initially endorsed GEAR and has played an active role in the ANC-led government for ten years. Underlying GEAR was not the sudden conversion of the central ANC leadership to neoliberal ideology but the imperatives of the world capitalist system: driving down the cost of labor in order to increase the international competitiveness of South African business.

Those like the SACP who argue that some other set of economic policies—e.g., the 1994 COSATU-authored Reconstruction and Development Program—could promote the welfare of labor and

and property forms of the ruling class. Lenin wrote in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918): “Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*” (emphasis in original). The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes. The capitalist state cannot be reformed. It must be smashed through socialist revolution.

Ironically, a counter-polemic against the SACP document published in an official journal of the ANC, *ANC Today* (13 June 2006), cites Marx to refute the notion that South Africa is not a capitalist society with a capitalist state: “In reality, the statement that South Africa ‘is not inherently capitalist’ is mere demagoguery, with no scientific, Marxist foundation.” Indeed it is!



Gideon Mendel

Top left: South African president Thabo Mbeki. Left: Former Mbeki deputy Jacob Zuma. Squatter camp in Soweto (above) epitomizes impoverishment, oppression of black masses under ANC-led regime.

capital simultaneously are peddling a nationalist lie. And the purpose of that lie is to obscure the fundamental fact that modern society is divided into two main classes—the capitalist exploiters and the exploited proletariat—whose interests are irreconcilable.

By centering its criticisms on Mbeki’s particular policies, the SACP seeks to disguise the class nature of South African society and the neo-apartheid capitalist state. Thus the document asserts: “The post-1994 democratic state is not inherently capitalist, it is, in fact, a sharply class-contested reality.” Furthermore, in regard to the judiciary, the police and intelligence forces, the document declares that “demagogic attacks on these institutions are short-sighted and reckless.”

As Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky argued repeatedly, there is no such thing as a class-neutral “democracy”; every state is an apparatus of repression—based on armed bodies of men, principally the army and police—that protects the social interests

Apartheid’s purpose was the procurement, reproduction and control of super-exploited African labor for white-owned capital, initially centered on the mining industries. The legal edifice may have changed, but the fundamental basis of South African capitalism, including the enormous disparities between racial groups, has not. During the anti-apartheid struggles, the SACP and COSATU leadership consciously maneuvered to tie the working class to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC despite the masses’ far more radical aspirations, thereby laying the basis for neo-apartheid capitalism. Exploitation, immiseration and oppression can be eliminated only through a *proletarian socialist revolution* modeled on the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party.

Menshevik/Stalinist “Two-Stage” Betrayal

The 1917 October Revolution was the great event of the 20th century. Leading

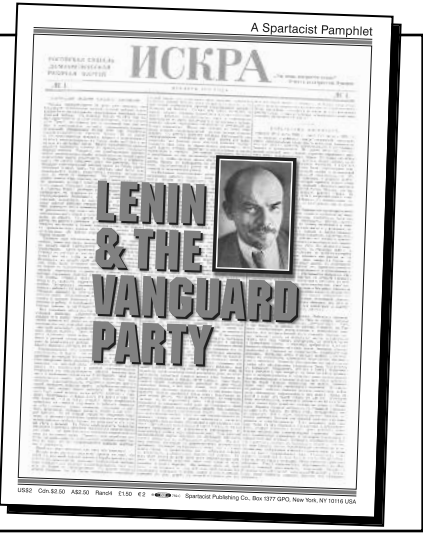
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First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin’s struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: “In Defense of Democratic Centralism”

This edition also includes: “The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party”

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South Africa...

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the vast, impoverished peasant masses, the small Russian working class, concentrated centrally in a few industrial centers, seized political power across one-sixth of the globe. The Russian Revolution smashed the old state apparatus, inherited from the tsarist autocracy, replacing the class dictatorship of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratically elected councils (soviets) of workers and peasants.

Despite the enormous poverty and backwardness that the Bolsheviks confronted (and the later degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Stalinist rule), the October Revolution laid the basis for a planned economy that would transform the country into an industrial powerhouse whose military might served as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Full employment, housing and health care were won only through the overthrow of capitalism.

Against the Mensheviks, the original proponents of “two-stage revolution,” Lenin wrote a few months after the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy while Russia was in revolutionary turmoil:

“The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie—the intellectuals, the prosperous peasants, the present parties of the Narodniks [populists]...and the Mensheviks—are *not* at present in favor of a revolution against the capitalists....
“The conclusion is obvious: only the



Neo-apartheid capitalism: Nelson Mandela at New York Stock Exchange on day South African gold corporation began trading, 2002; gold miner in Boksburg.

socialism but to bloody counterrevolution. The second stage, so to speak, occurred when the bourgeois nationalists turned on and massacred their Communist would-be allies and the workers and peasants who supported them, such as in China in 1927 and Indonesia in 1965.

Consider the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. By then the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state had placed at the head of the Communist International J.V. Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin, who applied the old Menshevik schema to colonial and semicolonial countries under the slogan of the “Anti-Imperialist United Front.” Insisting that the coming revolution in semicolonial China would be lim-

part of his struggle against the treacherous and disastrous Stalinist leadership of the world Communist movement) that Trotsky generalized his theory of permanent revolution, which he had first developed in 1904-06 with regard to the course of the revolutionary struggle in tsarist Russia. Permanent revolution *rejects* the nationalist bloc between the proletariat and its capitalist class enemy.

By the late 19th century, the major imperialist powers had subjugated the rest of the world through either conquest or commercial/financial dependency, while the struggle among them for economic and military predominance intensified. In countries of belated capitalist develop-

(contrary to Stalin’s later falsifications) that socialism could be built in a single country, especially not in a relatively poor country besieged by world imperialism. As Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution*: “In a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution.”

As we wrote shortly after the ANC succeeded the apartheid regime:

“The consolidation or simply the survival of a socialist revolution in South Africa *requires* its international extension. This was the core of the Bolsheviks’ program....

“For the moment South Africa is a weakened link in the chain of the world capitalist system binding the neocolonies of the Third World to the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan. It is necessary to mobilize the forces of the proletariat to *break* that chain at its weakest links, and then fight like hell to take the battle to the imperialist centers, seeking allies against the vicious enemy of all the oppressed—international capital. Thus, the fight to build a South African Bolshevik Party is inseparable from the struggle we in the International Communist League are waging to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International.”

—“South African Powder Keg: Part Four,” WV No. 606, 16 September 1994, reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12

A socialist revolution in South Africa would reverberate among working people and the oppressed the world over, finding strategically powerful allies in the proletariat of the imperialist centers.

For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party

Reflecting the growing popular discontent with the Mbeki government, several groups and individuals outside the Alliance have raised the call for a new mass workers party, for example, Trevor Ngwane of the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF). The Johannesburg-based APF functions as a kind of political sandbox for various pseudo-Trotskyist organizations in South Africa, including the Cliffite Keep Left group and the Democratic Socialist Movement, which is affiliated with the Taaffeite Committee for a Workers International. Trevor Ngwane himself is a former ANC local councillor who was expelled from the party in 2000 for opposing the extensive privatization of government-owned industries.

In a brief document titled, “The Vanguard and the Mass” (February 2005), Ngwane calls for “a party which groups the majority of workers together on politics which reflects their own interests” and denounces any conception of an independent vanguard party as amounting to “not really a vanguard—just a sect.” Ngwane’s “Socialist Group” in the APF issued a similar call three years ago. In response, we wrote in “South Africa: Union Militants Protest COSATU Alliance with ANC” (WV No. 808, 29 August 2003): “This is essentially a call for a ‘party of the whole class.’ The model for this is the (old) British Labour Party.... We reject the notion that the South African working

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Stalin’s 1927 autographed photo (center) sent to Chiang Kai-shek: “To the Guomindang’s victory and China’s liberation.” Left: In line with Stalinist policy, Shanghai workers welcomed Chiang Kai-shek’s troops into city, April 1927. Right: Execution of Communist Party member, one of thousands massacred following Chiang’s coup.

assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government” (emphasis in original).

—“A Strong Revolutionary Government” (May 1917)

This statement shows that Lenin had in effect come to the understanding earlier put forward by Trotsky that the revolution in Russia could be consummated only through the proletarian seizure of power.

As later practiced by the Stalinists, the “two-stage revolution” policy led not to

ited to a “national-democratic revolution” placing the bourgeoisie in power, Stalin and Bukharin, despite objections by Trotsky, continued the policy of the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) into Chiang Kai-shek’s bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (GMD), which soon engaged in a civil war against imperialist-backed Northern warlords in the name of unifying China.

In early 1927, the GMD army marched on Shanghai, then controlled by a local militarist backed by the British. Under CCP leadership, 500,000 workers staged a general strike that developed into a successful insurrection. Communist-led workers effectively took over this key metropolis. But the Shanghai proletariat laid down its arms on Stalin’s orders. And shortly after Chiang’s troops entered the city, where they were welcomed by the victorious workers, Chiang staged a bloody coup that beheaded the Chinese proletariat. Tens of thousands of Communists and revolutionary-minded workers were slaughtered. Following this catastrophic defeat, the battered CCP, under Moscow’s instructions, shifted its support from Chiang to a rival “left” GMD bourgeois nationalist, Wang Jingwei, who controlled the major city of Wuhan. A few months later, Wang in turn massacred his Communist would-be allies and their working-class supporters.

Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution

It was in the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Chinese Revolution (and

ment, the propertied classes emerged as too dependent on and tied to imperialism to complete the historic tasks of social and economic modernization. “Progressive developmental” capitalism in a country like South Africa or those of Latin America is an illusion. However, in many cases foreign investment has created a force capable of breaking the hold of imperialist domination and opening the road to social progress: the industrial proletariat.

Thus, Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1929): “With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation.”

In South Africa, adequate housing for millions in the townships and shantytowns, electricity and clean water for the entire population, free quality education, the eradication of *lobola* (the bride price) and female genital mutilation, the mobilization of all available scientific and medical resources in combating the AIDS pandemic: these desperately needed measures require the socialist transformation of the economy and society. South Africa’s industrial proletariat has the power and class interests to unite all of the oppressed in a determined battle for a revolutionary workers government.

Lenin, Trotsky and the other leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution never believed

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China...

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Statistical Yearbook) wages increased at an annual average of close to 12 percent. In the past few years, major industrial centers like Shenzhen and Shanghai have actually begun to experience a labor shortage, especially among skilled workers. As a consequence, employers are offering higher wages and improved benefits to attract labor. Hong Liang, an economist with the Wall Street firm Goldman Sachs, commented, “We’re seeing an end to the golden period of extremely low-cost labor in China” (*New York Times*, 3 April).

However, despite China’s economic growth rate of close to 10 percent for more than two decades, not all sections of the Chinese working class have experienced an improvement in their living standard. Quite the contrary. Beginning in the mid 1990s, small and medium-sized state-owned industrial enterprises were privatized, typically sold off to their former managers at giveaway prices. As a result of these privatizations, along with mergers and outright closures, some 20 to 30 million workers, disproportionately women, were laid off. Those who were fortunate found new jobs, mainly in the private sector, but generally had to take a cut in pay and received little or none of the extensive benefits provided by state-owned enterprises.

One major region was especially economically devastated by the closures: the northeast “rust belt,” where a large fraction of older industrial plants was concentrated. Here as much as 40 percent of the working class is jobless. Overall, unemployment is estimated to range from 6 to 13 percent of the economically active urban population. The National Development and Reform Commission, a government agency overseeing economic policy, projects that if the economy grows by 8 percent this year, China will generate an additional eleven million jobs. That is less than half of the official number of 25 million urban unemployed plus new entrants into the workforce (*Economist* [London], 25 March).

It is generally recognized that the “reform” era has seen a widening of inequalities, both within the cities and between urban and rural areas. In addition to the new class of rich capitalists, urban China now has a significant layer of petty-bourgeois professionals whose living standards are broadly similar to those of their equivalents in advanced capitalist countries. Meanwhile, according to the *China Human Development Report 2005*, put out by the United Nations Development Program, the gap between the average disposable income of urban and rural Chinese has reached 3.2 to 1.

Such statistics should not obscure the fact that in important respects there has also been a substantial improvement in the conditions of the peasantry. The consumption of electricity in rural areas increased almost eightfold between 1978 and 1997. Most peasant families possess some household appliances. Lippit points out that by 1997 two-thirds of rural households had at least a black and



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Shanghai skyline, rice farming in Sichuan province. Chinese Stalinists’ “market reforms” have spurred economic growth while increasing inequalities between urban centers and rural hinterlands.



Peter Turnley

white television set, a basic means of access to modern cultural life.

However, in other important respects the conditions of the peasantry have worsened. The rural communes of the Mao era provided rudimentary medical care, primary and secondary schooling, old-age pensions and other social programs. Between 1980 and 1983, the Deng regime dissolved the communes, replacing them with family farms with long-term leases—the “household responsibility system.” The social programs formerly provided by the communes were supposed to be taken over by the local government. Given the extreme decentralization of China’s system of government finance, the meager revenues of rural townships and villages were wholly inadequate for this. Peasant families had to pay out of pocket for medical care and schooling for their children. The social consequences were predictable:

“Despite commendable progress in providing access to education, serious imbalances remain. Rural areas lag far behind cities and China’s illiterate population is concentrated in rural areas. Great differences remain in school quality, and the gap in educational opportunities widens as students get older. “Significant gaps also remain in the health of urban and rural residents and among residents of various regions. Rural child and maternal mortality are twice as high in rural areas as in cities.... All indicators point to distinct gaps in nutrition between rural and urban children.”

—*China Human Development Report 2005*

There has been a sharp upsurge in what are officially called “mass incidents of unrest” in the countryside. These peasant protests and riots have been directed against the seizure of land by local officials without proper compensation and against arbitrary taxation, corruption and other bureaucratic abuses. In response, the Hu Jintao regime has promised, under the slogan of a “new socialist countryside,” to improve the conditions of the peasantry. The tax burden has been reduced, tuition fees at primary and secondary schools will be eliminated for many rural students, and the central government is slated to spend more money in rural areas for social programs and investment in infrastructure. However, as the *Economist* (11 March) pointed out:

“These measures do not herald any remarkable policy shift. Central-government spending on the countryside will still amount to only 8.9% of total government expenditure, up from last year’s 8.8% but down from 9.2% in 2004. Abolishing the agricultural tax and other fees imposed on peasants will save each rural dweller an average of 156 yuan (\$19) a year—about 4.8% of net income.”

A real narrowing of the gap between rural and urban China will require a massive redistribution and reallocation of economic resources. The introduction of modern technology in the countryside—from combines to chemical fertilizer to the whole complex of scientific farming—would require a qualitatively higher

industrial base than now exists. In turn, an increase in agricultural productivity would raise the need for a huge expansion of industrial jobs in urban areas to absorb the vast surplus of labor no longer needed in the countryside. Clearly, this would involve a lengthy process, particularly given the still limited size and relatively low level of productivity of China’s industrial base. Both the tempo and, in the final analysis, the very realizability of this perspective hinge on the aid that China would receive from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining the need for an international proletarian revolution.

China’s Proletariat and World Socialist Revolution

While Hart-Landsberg and Burkett argue that conditions have worsened for the peasantry and the working class of China during the “reform” era, the crux of their position lies on a fundamentally different plane. They condemn the development of the largest industrial working class in the world and identify this with the “restoration” of capitalism. Here their anarcho-populist outlook is directly counterposed to a Marxist understanding of social progress and the class difference between workers and peasants. In their rejoinder to Lippit, they quote with approval a statement by Tai-lok Lui, a leftist academic who participated in the discussion on *China and Socialism* in *Critical Asian Studies*: “The post-1978 economic reform has brought about the real proletarianization of China’s workers and farmers. They have been truly subordinated to the market and separated from the ownership of the means of production.”

What does Tai-lok Lui, who equates “market reforms” with the restoration of capitalism, mean when he writes that the enormous growth of China’s proletariat has been accompanied by their separation from “the ownership of the means of production”? What he is presumably referring to, in addition to privatizations in industry, is the liquidation of the rural communes of the Mao era that encompassed the large majority of the population. These communes were basically an aggregation of backward peasant holdings utilizing labor-intensive methods and relatively primitive technology. Insofar as China under Mao was relatively more egalitarian than under Deng and his successors, this was an equality of poverty in an overwhelmingly rural society.

To understand the historical significance of the transformation of a large fraction of China’s peasantry into proletarians, it is useful to look back at Karl Kautsky’s *The Agrarian Question* (1899). Lenin considered this a very important contribution to an understanding of the modern world economy. (Kautsky’s later rightist revisionism and hostility to the Bolshevik Revolution do not negate the value of his earlier works.) There is, of course, a fundamental difference between the class character of the late 19th-century imperial Germany that Kautsky described and the People’s Republic of China. Nonetheless, there is a parallelism in the social effects of the proletarianization of

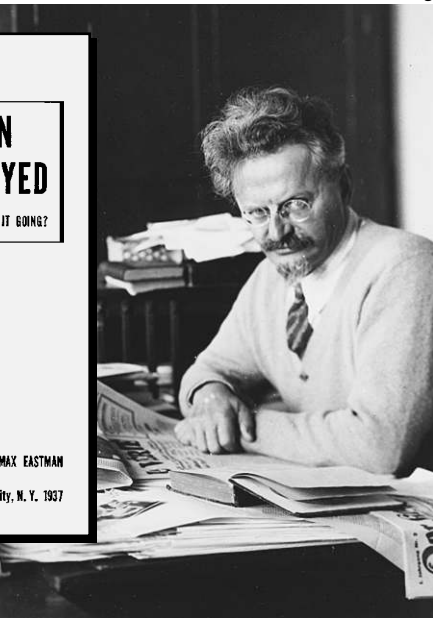
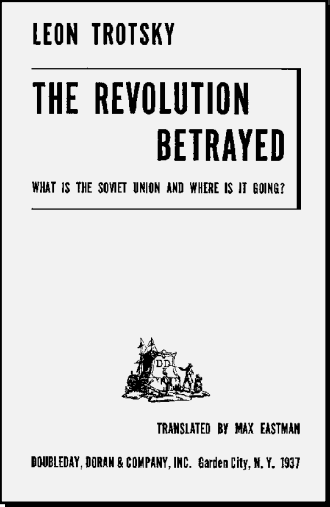
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Jean Weinberg



VAAP

Banner at December 1917 Russian workers demonstration includes call: “Long Live Soviet Power Which Has Paved the Way for Peace Among Nations.” Leon Trotsky’s 1936 *The Revolution Betrayed* presents Marxist analysis of degeneration of October Revolution under Stalinist bureaucracy.



1917...

(continued from page 7)

was no exception. The forces of counter-revolution were far from dead, and the ruling class wanted revenge for the humiliation of the June demonstration.

The June 18 demonstration showed clearly that at the base in the factories and some of the garrisons of Petrograd, the Bolsheviks had become the majority, or close to it. It was far from clear that the same situation applied in the provinces or on the front. The full impact of the offensive ordered by Kerensky on June 16—a fully predictable debacle—had yet to become known. But in Petrograd, the masses had reached the boiling point. Everything was in collapse, including transport, food and fuel. The February Revolution was sparked by a mass desire both to be rid of the Romanov dynasty and to put an end to the war—but several months later the murderous war was still raging.

The July 3-5 events were a semi-insurrection. Rejecting attempts by Bolshevik orators to contain the July 3 demonstration, soldiers marching in their regiments shouted “Down! Down!” As Trotsky relates in the *History*: “Such cries the Bolshevik balcony had never yet heard from the soldiers; it was an alarming sign. Behind the regiments the factories began to march up: ‘All power to the Soviets!’ ‘Down with the ten minister capitalists!’ Those had been the banners of June 18th, but now they were hedged with bayonets.” The Bolsheviks had tried to restrain the masses, but were unable to do so. Trotsky noted: “The Central Committee was oftener and oftener compelled to send agitators to the troops and the factories to restrain them from untimely action. With an embarrassed shake of the head, the Vyborg Bolsheviks would complain to their friends: ‘We have to play the part of the fire hose’.”

The insurrectionary sentiment of the workers and soldiers was captured by Trotsky in his descriptions of their military preparations: “On the morning of July 3, several thousand machine-gunners, after breaking up a meeting of the company and regimental committees of their regiment, elected a chairman of their own and demanded immediate consideration of the question of an armed manifestation.” Trotsky continues:

“In the yard of the barracks a no less feverish work was going on. They were giving out rifles to the soldiers who did not possess them, giving bombs to some, installing three machine-guns with operators on



Above: Soldiers and workers demonstrate in Petrograd under banners reading, “Down With the 10 Minister Capitalists!” and “All Power to the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies!” Below: Troops fire on protesters during the July Days.



each motor truck supplied by the factories. The regiment was to go into the street in full military array.... “The longest struggle took place at the Putilov Factory. At about two in the afternoon a rumour went round that a delegation had come from the machine-gun unit, and was calling a meeting. About ten thousand men assembled. To shouts of encouragement, the machine-gunners told how they had received an order to go to the front on the 4th of July, but they had decided ‘to go not to the German front, against the German proletariat, but against their own capitalist ministers’.”

Raskolnikov, a naval officer and a Bolshevik, desperately phoned the party headquarters for advice, since the Kronstadt sailors were determined to go out arms in hand. After initially opposing the demonstration, the Bolshevik leadership acquiesced. Rather than leaving the masses leaderless, the Bolsheviks went into battle with the demonstrators to

provide leadership for an orderly retreat.

The July Days represent the last gasp of the February Revolution, and a foretaste of October. All the contending classes were put on notice, and the counterrevolution did not shrink from battle. While the demonstrations of July 3 and 4 showed the power of the armed workers and soldiers, they did not attempt a seizure of state power. The Compromiser leadership of the Soviets railed against the masses who had come out for “All Power to the Soviets!” Trotsky writes:

“The Compromisers were waiting for reliable regiments. ‘A revolutionary people is in the streets,’ cried [the Menshevik] Dan, ‘but that people is engaged in a counter-revolutionary work.’ Dan was supported by Abramovich, one of the leaders of the Jewish Bund, a conservative pedant whose every instinct had been outraged by the revolution.”

Among the “reliable” troops the gov-

ernment and the Soviet leaders counted on were the Cossacks; in August, Kerensky would appeal to the Cossack general Kornilov to send a cavalry corps to Petrograd.

The wave of the semi-insurrection broke, in some cases with clashes with government troops. The revolutionary wave was quickly replaced by a counter-revolutionary campaign to drive the Bolsheviks underground. Trotsky was jailed; Lenin went into hiding. Lenin understood the importance of preserving the Bolshevik central cadre. Since 1914, Lenin had understood that the Social Democrats who supported “their” bourgeoisies in the war were agents of the *class enemy* rather than comrades gone astray. This prescient understanding was reinforced in the positive in October 1917 in Russia and tragically in the negative with the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg during the counterrevolutionary terror unleashed by the German Social Democrats following the Spartacus uprising in Berlin in January 1919.

The July Days illustrate with the clarity of a lightning strike the instability of the dual power which issued from the February Revolution. Either the bourgeoisie with its servile Menshevik and SR agents would liquidate the soviets in favor of some bourgeois parliament—in fact a rubber stamp for a military dictatorship—or the workers would seize the state power. The latter could occur via the soviets, or perhaps through the factory committees of the organized workers—Lenin remained flexible about the organizational form, particularly when the soviets under the leadership of the Mensheviks and SRs were more obstacles than assistants to the proletarian revolution.

The repression of the Bolsheviks following the July Days was short-lived. The party rebounded, as the workers and soldiers returned to its banners and leadership. This would be starkly shown when the bourgeoisie placed all their hopes in the Cossack general Kornilov in August. That gamble they lost. Kornilov’s coup failed, and it took a party with the determination to realize its revolutionary program in life to both repulse Kornilov and provide proletarian leadership to the agrarian revolt in the summer. That also involved internal party struggle. The great events of late 1917 are known to us not as the October Evolution but the *October Revolution*. The difference is qualitative, and indicates the divide between reformism of all stripes and Bolshevism, i.e., revolutionary Marxism.■

China...

(continued from page 11)

China’s peasantry under the “market socialist” economy. As Kautsky wrote:

“By bringing together the dispersed workers, the factory promotes their mutual communication; by developing the system of transportation and bringing more intellectually developed workers from the towns into the village, it brings the factory village into closer contact with the outside world. It is, therefore, a means for bringing part of the rural population closer to the urban proletariat, of gradually awakening their interest in and understanding of the latter’s struggle for emancipation. And finally, under favourable circumstances, it allows them to participate in this struggle.”

In fact, migrant workers from the countryside have been in the forefront of recent labor struggles in China. In the southeast, many young migrant women have gone on strike or otherwise refused to work under horrible sweatshop conditions, producing a severe labor shortage since the summer of 2004. In Shanghai and Beijing, migrant workers, who make up 80 percent of the labor force in the booming construction industry, have fought for and won better working conditions.

While restrictions on the movement from rural to urban China have been

relaxed over the past few decades, they have not been eliminated. Migrants, forced into the most dangerous and menial work, lack the rights of legal city residents and are typically forced to live in segregated areas. Many urban workers look down on migrants, who are seen as stealing jobs and depressing wages. A revolutionary vanguard party in China today would struggle to unify all sectors of the working class in alliance with the rural toilers and urban poor. Integral to the perspective of a proletarian political revolution is the fight for migrants to receive all the rights enjoyed by legal residents, including access to health care, housing and public education, as well as equal pay for equal work.

In their debate over China and socialism, the liberal Lippit and the self-professed Marxists Hart-Landsberg and Burkett share a fundamentally false framework. At an economic level, both reject the Marxist understanding that capitalism is a fetter on the global development of the productive forces and that the latter can only progress on the basis of a planned, international socialist economy. At a political level, both reject the perspective of world proletarian revolution as the only road to achieving such a society, finally resolving the problem of scarcity.

In his seminal examination of the Sta-

linist degeneration of the USSR, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky cited Marx’s comment in *The German Ideology* (1846) that “A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise [of communism], because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive.” By “all the old crap,” Marx meant class oppression, inequality and exploitation. Flatly repudiating this materialist understanding, the Stalinists preached the idiocy that socialism could be built in a single country if only imperialist military intervention were thwarted. The corollary to this perversion of Marxism was the Stalinists’ betrayals of proletarian revolutions internationally. In the Soviet Union, the end result was devastating capitalist counter-revolution. In China, Stalinist misrule has produced a society rife with contradictions and social discontents.

The People’s Republic of China today exhibits both the tremendous advantages that are a consequence of the overthrow of the capitalist system—centrally, a level of economic growth far outstripping that of capitalist neocolonies like India—as well as the profoundly negative fruits of Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The latter include sharply increased inequality, the growth

of new bourgeois forces intertwined with the parasitic bureaucracy, and the looming threat of a capitalist counterrevolution that would destroy the gains made by China’s worker and peasant masses. A Leninist-Trotskyist party must be forged to lead China’s huge and powerful working class, at the head of the peasants and urban poor, in a proletarian political revolution. As Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

“It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy. A restoration of the right of criticism, and a genuine freedom of elections, are necessary conditions for the further development of the country. This assumes a revival of freedom of Soviet parties, beginning with the party of Bolsheviks, and a resurrection of the trade unions. The bringing of democracy into industry means a radical revision of plans in the interests of toilers.... ‘Bourgeois norms of distribution’ will be confined within the limits of strict necessity, and, in step with the growth of social wealth, will give way to socialist equality.... The youth will receive the opportunity to breathe freely, criticize, make mistakes, and grow up. Science and art will be freed of their chains. And, finally, foreign policy will return to the traditions of revolutionary internationalism.”■

Join the Spartacus Youth Club!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.

Ten Point Program

- 1** Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!
- 2** Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!
- 3** For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!
- 4** For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed



SYC-initiated protest in defense of anti-military recruitment protesters at University of Chicago, March 2006.

mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour child-care! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

5 Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

6 Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For

labor mobilizations against racist cop terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

7 Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

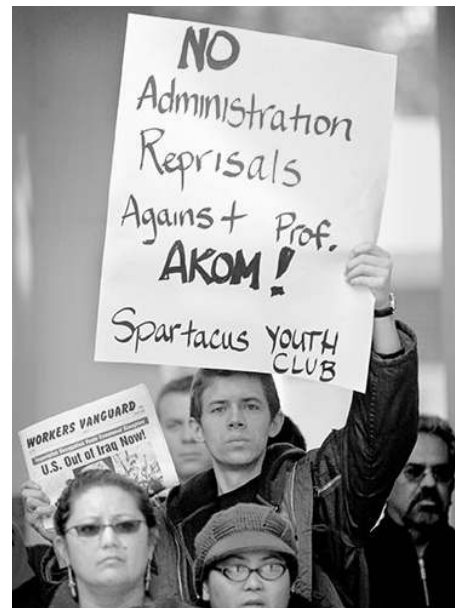
8 Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq now! Down with the colonial occupation! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Afghanistan, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the

world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

9 For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

10 Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).



SYC defends victimized black professor at San Francisco State University, March 2006.

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Lebanon...

(continued from page 1)

because, if there was to be a military option against Iran's nuclear facilities, it had to get rid of the weapons that Hezbollah could use in a potential retaliation at Israel."

In the event of an attack on Iran or Syria by the U.S.—or by Israel acting as a proxy for the U.S.—we would stand for the military defense of those countries without giving an iota of political support to the Ba'athist dictatorship in Damascus or the Persian-chauvinist Shi'ite clerical regime in Tehran. The U.S. is pushing for UN sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program if Iran does not suspend uranium enrichment by August 31. However, the U.S. is far from guaranteed that Russia and China would vote in the UN Security Council to impose sanctions.

On August 26, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that the country was opening a new heavy water plant, which is used to create nuclear fuel. The Iranian regime says that its development of nuclear technology is entirely for energy purposes. Regardless, what is clear is that in the face of imperialist belligerence and threats, Iran *needs* nuclear weapons and effective delivery systems to defend itself and deter attack. Additionally, as part of our unconditional military defense of the North Korean deformed workers state, we support that country's development and testing of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

"Lesser-Evil" Leftists on Parade

The true enemy of working people, minorities and the oppressed in the U.S. is the U.S. capitalist ruling class. The imperialist bourgeoisie that rained death and destruction on Afghanistan and Iraq is the same ruling class that left black and poor people to die when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, that has taken an ax to U.S. working people's pensions, health care and jobs while shredding democratic rights in the name of the "war on terror." In protests against the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the Spartacist League raised the call for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers at home. We fight to forge a workers party—a U.S. section of a reformed Fourth International—to lead the fight to sweep away the bloody U.S. imperialist system through socialist revolution.

Crucial to our perspective is the need to break workers and minorities from capitalist Democratic Party lesser-evilmism, which is actively promoted by the "Anybody but Bush" reformists. A case in point was an August 12 rally in Washington, D.C., organized by ANSWER, which was founded by the WWP and is currently led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which split from WWP in 2004. Speeches at the rally were directed almost exclusively against the Bush regime with barely a mention of the rabidly pro-Zionist Democratic Party.

All of the various antiwar coalitions

supported by reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the WWP, Socialist Action or the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) sought to build a liberal-pacifist antiwar movement premised on appealing to Democratic politicians to oppose "Bush's war" in Iraq. Thus none of these organizations forthrightly called for the military defense of Iraq in the lead-up to the 2003 invasion. And these coalitions either ignore or downplay the occupation of Afghanistan, not least because the Democratic Party hails this as a "just" war waged in retaliation for the September 11 attacks.

The current focus of the reformists'



Berlin, July 21: German Spartacists at protest against Israeli attack on Lebanon. Placard at right calls for German army out of Afghanistan, the Balkans, Africa and "Down With Colonial Occupation of Iraq!"

lesser-evilmism is "Camp Democracy," slated for the National Mall in Washington, D.C., beginning September 5. Cindy Sheehan, the Progressive Democrats of America, Democrats.com and like-minded liberals are building this as a "demonstration for peace, justice, and impeachment," aiming to advance the Democrats' fortunes in the November elections by drawing together all causes—from immigrant rights to labor issues to environmentalism—under the anti-Bush umbrella. Among its activities will be lobbying for an "End the Iraq War Act" that calls for replacing U.S. troops in Iraq with a UN/NATO occupation force. And among Camp Democracy's endorsers are the ISO's Campus Antiwar Network front group and the RCP's "World Can't Wait" outfit.

The other face of the ISO's bourgeois lesser-evilmism is ISO leader Todd Chretien's campaign for U.S. Senate in California on the ticket of the Greens, a small-time capitalist party whose electoral work is aimed at pressuring the Democrats to be more "progressive." For its part, the WWP's International Action Center (IAC) is calling for a vote to Democratic Congressional candidate Charles Barron in Brooklyn, with IAC head Larry Holmes declaring that the election of this capitalist politician would "help put one

of our own in Congress" (*Workers World*, 27 July).

For New October Revolutions!

In the Lebanon protests in the U.S., the Spartacist League was unique in stressing the need to militarily defend Hezbollah against Zionist attack while at the same time making clear our political opposition to Hezbollah, Hamas and all other Islamic fundamentalist forces. WWP appears to have taken notice, writing in a *Workers World* (17 August) statement: "Some in the anti-war movement, even some who call themselves Marxists, have separated themselves from Hezbollah and Hamas, have even attacked them when they are

under fire, on the grounds of ideology, because they are religious. This is a complete violation of principled anti-imperialism and Marxism."

It is the ABC of Marxism to fight for the complete political *independence* of the proletariat from any and all non-proletarian forces and social classes, which certainly includes the anti-woman, anti-Semitic Hezbollah. We stood for the military defense of Hezbollah because an Israeli victory would have deepened the oppression of the Lebanese masses, strengthened the Zionists' whip hand against the Palestinians and furthered U.S. designs in the region.

Workers World (31 August) reprints an interview with Hezbollah's Hasan Nasrallah under the headline "Hezbollah Leader Calls For: 'United Front Against Imperialism'," while another article in the same issue approvingly quotes the head of the Lebanese Communist Party calling Nasrallah "our Arab Che Guevara with a turban" and describes Hezbollah as "the party of the downtrodden and oppressed." Building on the popularity it acquired by standing up to the Israeli military onslaught, Hezbollah is today taking the lead in rebuilding southern Lebanon and in providing relief. But Hezbollah's increasing authority represents a dire threat to women, Christians, the Druze,

Sunnis and also Shi'ites deemed by Hezbollah to be "non-believers." Far from an expression of "anti-imperialism," the rise of Islamic mass movements reflects despair in the face of brutal oppression. It is the reactionary product of the political bankruptcy of nationalism and the absence of a communist alternative.

What is needed in the Near East is the forging of revolutionary internationalist workers parties through irreconcilable struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism. It is capitalist rule, which fuels national, ethnic and religious divisions, that has driven the constant bloodshed in the region. There will be no equitable resolution to the conflicting claims of the peoples of the Near East until bourgeois rule is overthrown and imperialist subjugation ended. This is particularly the case for Israel/Palestine, a case of two interpenetrated peoples who lay claim to the same piece of land. Assuring the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples requires shattering the Zionist garrison state from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution and the overthrow of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the bloody Ba'athist bonapartist regime in Syria and the capitalist regime in Lebanon, establishing a socialist federation of the Near East.

U.S. imperialism played a key role in fostering the growth of Islamic reaction during the Cold War as a counterweight to Communism and secular nationalism in the Near East. The crucial battle was in Afghanistan following the Soviet intervention in 1979. The U.S. imperialists funneled billions of dollars in aid to the *mujahedin* cutthroats to kill Soviet soldiers. We said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution to the Afghan peoples. In 1989, when the treacherous Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow pulled out the troops, we denounced this betrayal, warning that it was far better to fight and defeat counterrevolution in Afghanistan than to have to confront it in Moscow.

The bulk of the left traitorously joined the imperialists' anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade. This was exemplified by the anti-Communist ISO, which proclaimed in *Socialist Worker* (May 1988): "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs." The ISO and much of the rest of the left cheered the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, a world-historic defeat for the proletariat internationally and a boon for the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) stood at its post to the end in defense of the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution. Today we fight to cohere Marxist workers parties committed to the struggle for new October Revolutions—the only road to ridding the world of imperialist war, national oppression and capitalist exploitation. ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 10)

class must pass through the experience of a mass reformist party before a revolutionary party can develop out of it—a kind of two-stage theory of party-building."

In practice, the APF is a class-collaborationist outfit seeking to pressure the ANC-led regime from the left. This is clearly indicated by the APF's allegiance to the World Social Forum (WSF) movement, which is also supported by the COSATU leadership. The purpose of the Social Forums, which are bankrolled by various agencies of the imperialist rulers and their neocolonial underlings, was to draw left-

radical youth protesting the evils of "globalization" away from pitched battles with the forces of the capitalist state and to corral them behind the "democratic alternative" of parliamentary reformism, while pretending that these talk shops were "non-parliamentary" (see "Social Forum Con Game," *WV* No. 853, 2 September 2005).

The list of sponsors of the biannual meetings of the WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil, include the Brazilian federal government, the Banco do Brasil and the country's giant oil company, Petrobras. The 2003 European Social Forum (ESF) in Paris was funded by the right-wing Chirac government. And the 2004 ESF in London was bankrolled and hosted by New Labour mayor Ken Livingstone,

supporter of the U.S./NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999.

The Social Forums have been dominated by the misnamed "Non-Governmental" Organizations (NGOs). These organizations, sanctioned by and receiving much of their funding from churches, corporations and capitalist states, are hardly independent of the governments to which they are answerable. Like other components of the Social Forum movement elsewhere, the APF in South Africa is funded by NGOs such as Oxfam Canada and War on Want. As the old saying goes, "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

For the perspective of permanent revolution in South Africa to become a reality requires the forging of a vanguard

party modeled on Lenin's Bolshevik Party, a party which led the first and only successful proletarian revolution in history. This party united the most politically advanced workers with the best of the leftist intellectuals. The Bolshevik Party was built through political and polemical struggle against the reformist pseudo-Marxists (the Mensheviks), the populist Social Revolutionaries and the left nationalists of the various oppressed peoples of the tsarist empire. Similarly, our comrades of Spartacist South Africa seek to aggressively confront the different currents of the South African left in political and polemical struggle with the aim of forging an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party on a clear programmatic basis. ■

Mumia...

(continued from page 16)

an appeal to mainstream bourgeois liberals who see Mumia’s case as an isolated “miscarriage of justice.” Such an approach demobilized and demoralized the millions who earlier rallied to Mumia’s defense.

Indeed, the LAC itself was launched in January 1999 in explicit “solidarity with the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal,” which was initiated by Socialist Action (SA). Along with the Workers World Party (WWP), SA was among the most persistent and prominent proponents of the call for a “new trial.” The LAC issued an international appeal to build rallies on 24 April 1999 around two central demands: “Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal” and “A new and fair trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal.” The LAC sought to provide a “labor” face to the political program of seeking “justice” from the capitalist class enemy. Among the signatories to the appeal was Jack Heyman, an LAC supporter and at the time an Executive Board member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10. Heyman was a central initiator of the ILWU port shutdown on the West Coast in solidarity with Mumia that took place in conjunction with the April 24 protests. The port shutdown was a powerful example of the kind of social power that must be mobilized in a class-struggle fight to free Mumia. But Heyman himself undermined this action by tying it to appeals for a “new trial.” A central speaker at the 24 April 1999 rally, he uttered not a word against either the “new trial” demand or the “Democratic” Party of American imperialism.

A year later, an LAC-organized “Labor Conference for Mumia” held on 12 May 2000 passed a motion appealing to none other than Clinton’s Justice Department to “launch an official investigation into Mumia’s case.” At the same conference, one of the LAC’s own supporters, Bob Mandel, put forward a motion condemning the appointment of Ed Rendell, Philadelphia district attorney at the time of Mumia’s 1982 trial, as chairman of the Democratic National Committee. The motion also called for Democratic Party delegates from the unions to raise motions

demanding a “new trial for Mumia.” This groveling appeal to the Democratic Party, the other capitalist party of war and racism, to be a vehicle for mobilizing workers could not be a clearer example of the irreconcilable gulf between the strategy of mobilizing the independent power of the working class and that of reliance on the agencies of the class enemy.

That there is more than a little political hustle and fraud involved in the LAC is given added dimension by the fact that one of the groups behind it is the dubious “Bolshevik Tendency” (BT). The BT published *not one* article in its press in defense of Mumia until after the massive worldwide protests in 1995 that stayed the executioner’s hand. The BT, however, did make a press splash at the height of these protests—in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. In a 16 June 1995 article, this mouthpiece for U.S. finance capital retailed the BT’s slanders of the Spartacist League as a deranged “cult” in order to smear the PDC’s efforts on behalf of Mumia, including our work to make his case a cause of the international workers movement. The intent of the *Wall Street Journal* in smearing Mumia’s supporters was transparent enough. How and why the minuscule BT was so readily wielded as a tool for the *WSJ* is not.

We do know that a defining feature of the BT since its inception in the 1980s, when it was formed by embittered ex-members of the Spartacist League, has been its sneering contempt for the fight for black liberation. When the SL and PDC mobilized mass labor/black protests to stop fascist terror, the BT denounced this as a retreat from the “working class” in favor of the “ghetto unemployed.” The BT’s response to the government’s racist massacre of the Philadelphia MOVE commune on 13 May 1985—in which eleven men, women and children were killed and an entire black neighborhood burned to the ground—simply went outside the bounds of proletarian morality. While much of the reformist left cringed from the elementary duty to defend MOVE, we sought to sear this atrocity into the memory of the working class and to that end held a rally in solidarity with the MOVE victims. At the time, the BT did not protest the bombing of the MOVE commune but did sneer at our soli-

FREE MUMIA NOW!

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!



Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

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RALLY!

BAY AREA

Sat., Oct. 21, 2 p.m.
YWCA
1515 Webster St., Oakland
(at 15th St., 2 blocks from
12th St./City Center BART station)
More info: (510) 839-0852

CHICAGO

Fri., Oct. 13, 7 p.m.
United Electrical Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
More info: (312) 563-0442

LOS ANGELES

Thurs., Oct. 19, 6:30 p.m.
UCLA Downtown
Labor Center
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NEW YORK

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idity with MOVE. It is notable that, even today, the LAC materials building for the September 15 rally disappear the fact that Mumia is a MOVE supporter.

The PDC seeks to revive the worldwide movement for Mumia’s freedom, to appeal to the millions who were demobilized by the fraudulent political program and strategy advanced by a host of liberals and reformist organizations—WWP, SA, the International Socialist Organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the LAC. The fact that these millions have not been mobilized in class-struggle action

to free Mumia is centrally the responsibility of the pro-capitalist union misleaders, aided and abetted by their fake-left tails. What is required is an uncompromising political struggle to unchain labor’s power in the fight to free Mumia. This struggle is integrally linked to the fight to forge a Leninist vanguard party to lead the working class in socialist revolution. Such a party must act as the champion of all the exploited and oppressed, recognizing that the fight for black liberation is key to the struggle for workers revolution. Free Mumia now! ■

Chicago...

(continued from page 16)

Ramparts Division became synonymous with cop violence. The police, along with the army and the courts, are the core of the state apparatus that exists to enforce the property rights and class rule of the capitalists. And in the U.S., where black oppression is embedded in the capitalist system, it is black people who face the brunt of the cops’ daily regimen of brutality. On any given day in his life, a black man in America may wind up in jail, in the hospital or in the morgue after a run-in with the police. Just ask 14-year-old Cabrini Green resident Ellis Woodland, who was shot by the Chicago cops on August 7 and is still in critical condition.

Burge is not some “rogue” cop. He is a true product of the American way. As an MP during the Vietnam War, Burge learned torture techniques that he later “refined” on black Chicago. A former cop under Burge’s command testified that interrogations were referred to as the “Vietnam Special.”

The cops’ brutal interrogations became public knowledge at the time of a 1989 trial over a lawsuit filed by Andrew Wilson, who testified to the abuse he suffered at the hands of Burge, John Yucaitis and Patrick O’Hara. Wilson was beaten bloody, nearly suffocated from a plastic bag placed over his head, burned with a cigarette, given electric shock treatment through alligator clips attached to his nostril and ears and handcuffed against a scalding radiator. Then Burge put a gun in Wilson’s mouth and told him that if he confessed he wouldn’t be subjected to electric shock again.

Wilson’s ordeal came on the heels of the fatal shooting of two cops in 1982.

A five-day manhunt, directed by Burge, turned a Chicago South Side community into a virtual war zone. Cops conducted house-to-house searches, kicking down doors and holding occupants, including children, at gunpoint. Black males were treated as suspects whether they matched the shooter’s description or not. Even one detective felt compelled to remark, “It was a reign of terror. I don’t know what Kristallnacht was like, but this was probably close” (“Deaf to the Screams,” *Chicago Reader*, 1 August 2003). It was only after Wilson courageously filed his suit that other victims of Burge & Co. in Area Two came forward with remarkably similar accounts of electrical torture targeting the genitals, suffocation, beatings, burns and Russian roulette.

Responsibility for the cops’ reign of terror lies squarely with the Democratic Party, which has ruled Segregation City on behalf of the capitalists for the better part of a century. Mayor Richard Daley, who served as Cook County State’s Attorney in the 1980s, knew about it, as did his assistant Dick Devine and all the top brass. Chicago’s first black mayor, Harold Washington, was no less complicit. Following an outcry over the five-day cop siege on the South Side and other police atrocities, Washington campaigned in 1983 on a “progressive” platform demanding that then-Police Superintendent Richard Brzezczek be fired. Yet it was a Washington appointee, Police Superintendent Fred Rice, who gave Burge a double promotion *after* the Andrew Wilson allegations surfaced. The prosecutors who are now doing damage control for Daley are more cops in the same Democratic Party machine. Special prosecutor Edward Egan has a nephew who not only worked under Burge’s command but was the arresting officer of one

of the torture victims. Egan’s assistant, Robert Boyle, was in the State’s Attorney’s office in 1969 when it worked with the Feds to assassinate Black Panther Party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

Only in 2002 did a Cook County judge mandate an investigation into the Violent Crimes Unit. But prosecuting the cops was never the court’s intention. The intent was to paint the abuse as an aberration—the work of a few “bad apples”—in order to refurbish the credentials of the police. At the time of public police department hearings over the Andrew Wilson case, we warned in “Torture Town Chicago” (WV No. 547, 20 March 1992): “Burge and his minions deserve to be locked in hell. But don’t hold your breath waiting for justice from the racist Democrats who run Chicago, or from the capitalist courts which have already shot down a civil suit brought by Andrew Wilson. Nor can the cops be tamed by police review board or other bandaid reforms. The ruling class will allow no real restraints on the armed thugs who defend their profit system.”


In contrast to this Marxist understanding, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its front group, Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP), have repeatedly fostered the illusion that the courts can deliver justice for the victims of police terror. In 2002, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (3 May 2002) hailed as an “important victory” the court order for an investigation. A few months ago, *Socialist Worker* (26 May) gushed that the cops’ victims had won another “victory” when the court ruled that the special prosecutors could release their findings. Now *Socialist Worker* (28 July) bemoans how these findings amount to “whitewashing police torture”—which is precisely what such “investigations” are designed to do. The CEDP has also cra-

venly called for “new trials for torture victims.” So the ISO would give the state another chance to frame up these men, this time with an appearance of legitimacy? We say: Free them now!

It is vitally important that the social power of labor be mobilized in struggle against rampant police brutality and racist attacks. Such struggle must be infused with the understanding that there will be no end to cop terror short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression that the police “serve and protect.” We seek to forge a Leninist vanguard party that will lead all of the exploited and oppressed in the fight for socialist revolution—the only road to sweeping away the capitalist state and its frame-up machinery. ■

Partisan Defense Committee
July 2006
Pamphlet \$1

The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal



Mumia Is Innocent!

Anatomy of a Frame-Up

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\$1 (48 pages)
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Join PDC Contingent — Oakland, September 15!

For Class-Struggle Defense to Free Mumia Now!

The following leaflet was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee in the Bay Area on August 29.

The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal has reached a crucial juncture. A former Black Panther Party spokesman and later MOVE supporter, Mumia has been on death row for over 24 years, falsely convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia's innocence has been attested to by mountains of evidence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, killed Faulkner. Mumia is the victim of the forces of racist capitalist "law and order" who have framed him up for a crime he did not commit, who see in him a voice of defiant opposition to the oppression of black people that is a cornerstone of American capitalism. Their determination to carry out his execution is a warning to all who challenge cop repression, to workers who stand up for their rights on picket lines, to those who protest U.S. imperialist depredations in Iraq and elsewhere around the world.

Mumia's case lays bare the workings of the capitalist state. His frame-up conviction was not the act of one "rogue" cop or prosecutor or judge, but that of an entire system that cannot be reformed. With the execution in December 2005 of Stanley Tookie Williams, over substantial popular opposition, the ruling class sent a signal that they are deadly serious that Mumia will soon be another victim of the barbaric death penalty. There should be no doubt: the racist capitalist rulers are determined to see Mumia dead. *The multiracial working class has every interest in fighting against that outcome and must be mobilized independently of the very forces of the capitalist state that framed up this innocent*

man! Free Mumia—he should not spend another moment in prison hell!

The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization whose purpose

is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. We call on all those committed to the fight to free Mumia to join our contingent under the slogans: "There is no justice in the capitalist courts!"



Spartacist/Partisan Defense Committee contingent in demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Harlem, 23 April 2005.

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

For class-struggle defense to free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!" at the September 15 Oakland rally initiated by the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (LAC). The PDC has endorsed this rally based on the slogans put forward by the LAC, for which we have historically struggled —"Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! For Labor Action to Free Mumia! End the Racist Death Penalty!" We were given a written commitment by the LAC that the rally will be organized as a genuine united-front action. That entails both unity in action in the fight for Mumia's freedom and "freedom of criticism"—the sharp and clear contention of the different political programs and strategies advanced by the participating organizations.

The PDC and Spartacist League took up Mumia's case in 1987. We have fought for class-struggle defense to free Mumia—based on the social power of the working class and the understanding that the capitalist state serves the interests of the racist ruling class—and for the abolition of the racist death penalty. We have advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings in the case, while placing no faith whatsoever in the justice of the courts. Rather, we place our confidence in the power of the masses, particularly the organized workers movement, which is the only pressure that can force the courts to respond.

This strategy was and is counterposed to those who have centered their protest actions around the call for a "new trial" for Mumia. That call represents a program of reliance on the racist capitalist courts that at every level have declared that Mumia has no rights they are bound to respect. The call for a new trial is

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Chicago Police Torture Machine

Racist Cops Let Off

CHICAGO—A national and international spotlight was turned on the Chicago police with the July 19 release of a special prosecutor's report on beating and torture complaints against the Violent Crimes Unit commanded by former Lieutenant Jon Burge. The brutality meted out under Burge, who was the Violent Crimes commander for police Area Two and Commander for Area Three, was also described in a May report

of the UN Committee on Torture. From 1973 to 1991, Burge and his henchmen extracted "confessions" from black "suspects" on Chicago's South Side through gruesome methods of torture, all with the complicity of the city's Democratic Party machine and top cop brass. What happened under Burge's command brings to mind the U.S. military's sadistic abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib in Iraq.

The City has been forced to acknowledge some instances of wrongdoing while covering up the far-reaching web of those involved. Burge was fired in 1993 at age 46, keeping his pension, which he enjoys to this day. But despite testimony that nearly 200 "suspects" were brutalized and tortured, the special prosecutors decided not to prosecute a single cop, claiming that the statute of limitations had run out and that

only three cases could be proven anyway. Dozens of Burge's victims remain in prison, some for life, based on "confessions" extracted through torture methods. Among them are several men who had been sentenced to death. The prospect of executing them was a key factor in the decision by Illinois' then-Governor George Ryan to impose a statewide moratorium on executions in 2000, leading to the commutations of all death sentences in 2003.

Burge's Violent Crimes Unit is not unique in its wanton brutality. Look at New York City, where depraved cops tortured Abner Louima; or Philadelphia with its notorious police frame-up machine that has railroaded hundreds to prison, including death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal; or Los Angeles, where the

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Chicago Reader
Andrew Wilson, tortured by Chicago cops in 1982.